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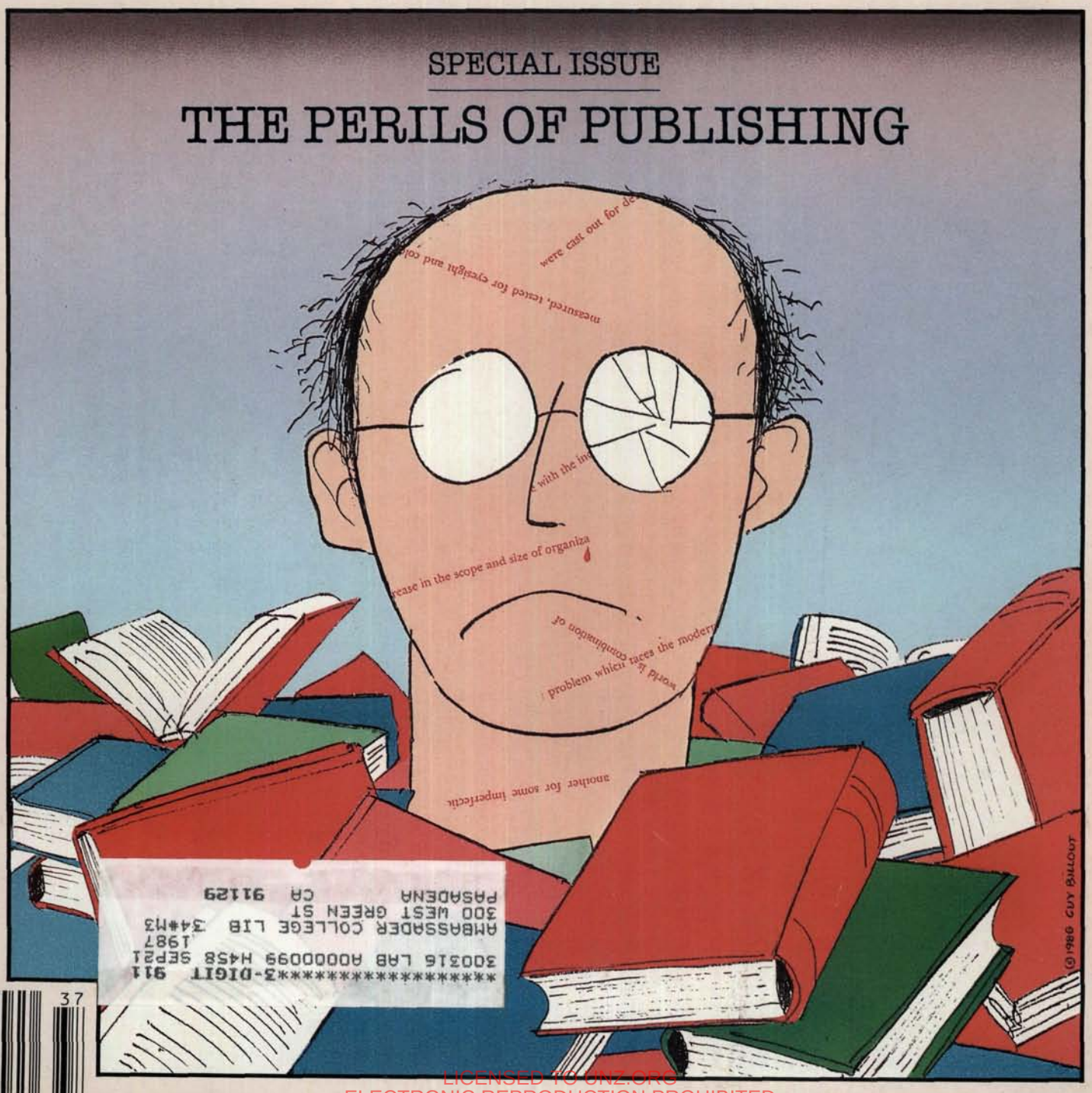
BERT CONQUEST:
HINKING LIKE LENIN

The Editors: The Next Tax Reform

ROBERT KUTTNER: TRADE WAR THREAT • ANDREW SULLIVAN: PUMPING IRON ADDICTION

THE NEW REPUBLIC

SEP 02 1986


SPECIAL ISSUE
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COUNTER-PARASITES

To the editors:

Fred Barnes's comments on "The Parasite Culture of Washington" (July 28) will undoubtedly prompt much speculation and much envy about the six-figure salaries and perks of thousands of parasites. But Washington is not unique in this respect. Unfortunately, other areas—corporate America, broadcasting management, the movie industry—provide much evidence of excessive, nonproductive, egomaniacal "parasitism" for which the final consumer or taxpayer ultimately pays. Veblen had a great word for what many of these "parasites" produce; *illth*, as contrasted with *wealth*.

What Barnes does *not* cover in the article, however, bothers me more than what he does cover. So permit me to salute a large number of Washington men and women: the "brown-bag" community. For almost 40 years I have come to know this group well, having served in the labor movement and the religious community and the government itself. They are the hundreds of lawyers and social workers and ministers who were attracted to Washington by one social cause or another. They may occasionally lunch at Krupin's or Pierre's, but most of the time they arrange or attend "bring-your-own-brown-bag" lunches, because neither they nor their organizations can afford the other kind.

The "brown-bag" crowd could easily join the group Barnes describes, double or triple their income, and get themselves on the best invitation lists. Some of them have indeed made the transition. But at any given time there are many hundreds of committed brown-baggers working for better health programs, immigration laws, civil rights enforcement, world peace—and dozens of other critical issues. They may be employed by labor unions, by religious groups, by "public-interest" organizations—or associated with ad-hoc committees or task forces created for a specific goal. They serve as the eyes and ears and the voice for particular constituencies. They reflect the pluralist democracy that is America.

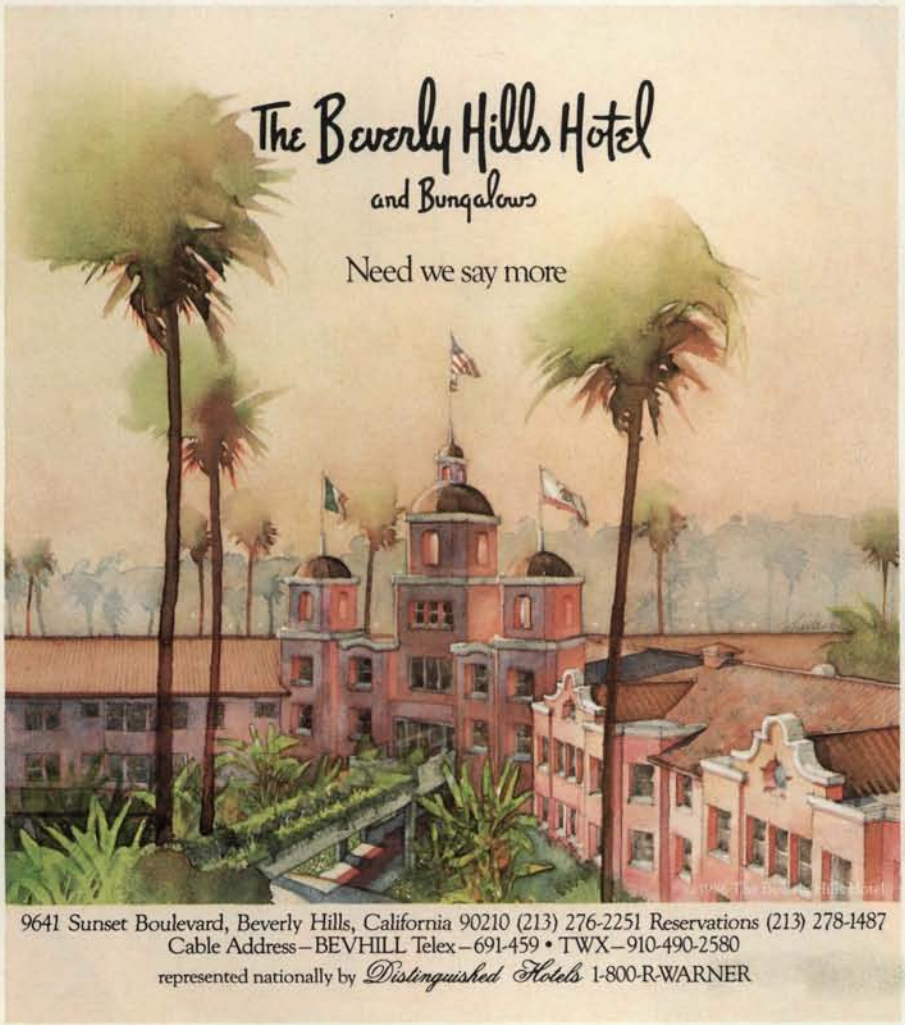
Let the Barneses expose the Deavers and the other parasites as they may be perceived. But, please, don't use a brush so broad that it distorts the entire picture. Washington is not quite a political Sodom and Gomorrah.

HYMAN BOOKBINDER
Washington Representative
The American Jewish Committee
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

It would have made Fred Barnes's article even more fascinating and disturbing if he had added a sentence reminding his readers that our first several presidents, from Washington at least down to Jackson, all left office poorer than when they entered, thus emphasizing how important it is for the top leader to set a standard both in rhetoric and behavior.

JAMES H. TIPTON
Palmer, Puerto Rico



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BEFORE THE CONTRAS

To the editors:

Your tortured analysis of the war in Nicaragua ("Democrats and Comandantes," July 28) and your endorsement of the Reagan program to step up the war lack historical perspective.

The United States began its regular intervention in Central America 130 years ago, long before there was a Soviet Union or a Fidel Castro. In 1853 the U.S. sent troops to Nicaragua to protect Americans during political disturbances. In 1854 a city was destroyed to avenge an insult to the American minister in Nicaragua. The U.S. intervened in other Nicaraguan revolutions in 1856 and 1894. In 1912 President Taft sent the Marines to set up a puppet regime, and the U.S. maintained a military presence there until 1933, when the brutal Somoza regime took power.

In 1885 the U.S. sent troops to Panama to protect its interests in the railroads. Between 1900 and 1933, the U.S. intervened in Cuba four times, in Nicaragua twice, in Guatemala once, in Honduras seven times, in Panama five times.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUES 3,739 & 3,740

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

Now that passage of tax reform seems inevitable, the doubters are getting one last say. They would have you believe America is about to wake up with a head-splitting hangover and the horrifying discovery that during the previous night's festivities it got married to a gorilla. In econometric laboratories across the nation, huge computer models churn out their ludicrously precise prognoses (growth down 0.3 percent, predicts Wharton Econometrics). Journalists round up the usual quotable suspects: Allen Sinai of Shearson Lehman Brothers (the chance of a recession has doubled), former Council of Economic Advisers chairman Murray Weidenbaum (unemployment will go up half a percent), Lawrence Chimerine of Chase Econometrics (no likely effect over ten years), Edward Yardeni of Prudential-Bache Securities ("This is the wrong time. . .").

These people make a fine living as consultants to business. Do any of them believe in capitalism? The basic philosophy of this reform is to get the government out of the way and let capitalism do its thing by taxing all types of economic activity more equally. If you believe in capitalism, how can that be bad for the economy?

The economic landscape will change, of course. Near my office in Washington is the notorious "hotel corner," where three large luxury hotels have popped up in a year. Trouble is, there aren't enough customers. Those hotels would never have been built except for the "incentives" this tax reform eliminates. But how do empty hotel rooms add to our national prosperity? In the future, hotel builders will look for customers first.

Wall Street's takeover mania also will cool. The misguided 1981 tax act gave huge depreciation write-offs to new purchasers of business assets. This has had the perverse effect of making any company that hasn't changed hands for a couple of years more valuable to outsiders than to its current owners (who have already used up the best part of their write-offs). Reform will slow the pointless churning of assets. Businesses will be more likely to end up and stay put in the hands of those who can run them most productively.

Heavy industry is moaning the loss of the investment tax credit for machinery. Yet study after study has shown that the ITC cost the government more in lost revenue than it has added to business investment. (That's because most investments that got the credit would have been made anyway.) Venture capitalists, meanwhile—belying their self-image as business buccaneers—whine that they will have to pay the same 28 percent top rate on their capital gains that other investors pay on dividends and interest. But why should the government favor one form of investment over another?

What upsets the business community most, of course, is the overall shift in the tax burden from individuals to corporations, amounting to $120 billion over five years. Even this, though, can be defended on pure capitalist grounds.

It's true, as the business mantra has it, that "corporations don't pay taxes, only people pay taxes." But that doesn't mean that corporate profits shouldn't be taxed, in one way or another. Corporate profits are a form of return to capital, and there's no reason people—corporate stockholders—shouldn't be taxed on the return to capital. In recent decades, the share of revenue coming from the corporate income tax has plummeted, the capital gains loophole has been expanded, and the estate tax has been virtually abolished. Meanwhile inflation has pushed working people into higher brackets, and the Social Security payroll tax has continued its relentless climb. As an overall result, more and more of the tax burden has shifted from capital to labor—that is, salary and wages.

The current reforms merely push this process back to where it was in the mid-1970s. Fairness alone would justify this shift. But economic efficiency also dictates that labor shouldn't bear a disproportionate share of the tax burden. By raising taxes on labor and reducing taxes on capital, the government has in effect been subsidizing businesses to replace people with machines. This makes no more sense than using the tax code to promote one form of investment over

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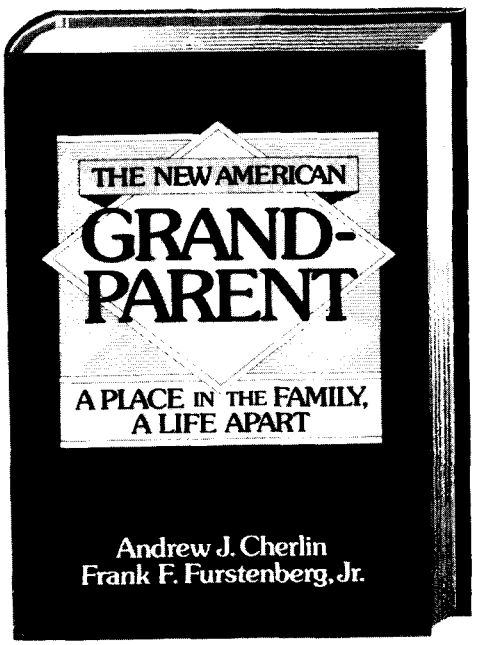

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
SEPTEMBER 15 & 22, 1986

THE NEXT TAX REFORM

Tax reform used to be clearly identified with the Democratic Party. President Jimmy Carter called the tax system "a disgrace to the human race." Liberal academics made the case for a simpler system with fewer loopholes. And Senator Bill Bradley and Representative Richard Gephardt, both Democrats, introduced the first bill in the current round of reform. But in 1984 Democratic candidate Walter Mondale refused to campaign on a Bradley-style tax-reform plan, for fear of offending various constituencies. Subsequently in Congress, many Democrats balked at hurting special interest groups and business PACs that increasingly bankroll their campaigns. Come November, Democratic candidates will, at best, share credit for the new tax reform bill with the Republicans.

But the Democrats still can redeem themselves on the issue of tax fairness. Reform of the income tax is an important achievement. But even with the new bill, the combined Social Security (FICA) payroll tax per worker will climb to 15 percent by 1990—the same as the top marginal income tax rate for 80 percent of all taxpayers. So while everyone's in a reforming mood, the Democrats should get out front on what will probably be the next tax overhaul issue: making Social Security taxes fairer and less onerous.

FICA is terribly regressive. Everyone, rich or poor, pays the same 7.15 percent of earnings (plus a matching share paid by employers). The only income distinctions benefit the well-off: income over $42,000 a year is FICA-tax-free, as is all income from investments. While income tax rates have been cut in recent years, especially for the well-off, the FICA tax has been getting more burdensome, especially for low-income people. Because of rising Social Security taxes, the total federal tax burden of a family of four at the poverty line rose from 1.8 percent of its income in 1979 to 10.4 percent in 1985. In effect, President Reagan and Congress have been raising the regressive FICA tax to make up for revenue forfeited by the huge 1981 tax cut for business and the wealthy.

The tax reform bill undoes much of this damage, largely by increasing the earned income credit, which was originally enacted to offset the impact of Social Security taxes on the working poor, but which had been worn away by inflation in the 1970s. The new law raises the credit from $550 per year to $800, and indexes it to inflation. Twice as many families as before will be eligible. Total federal tax on households earning $10,000 or less will go down by 65.7 percent by 1988. Taxes on households earning between $10,000 and $20,000 will drop 22.3 percent. Six million poor households will be taken off the income tax rolls completely. But many of them still have to pay Social Security tax. One of the worst things about FICA is that it applies to the very first dollar a poor person earns.

FICA is a job destroyer, too. Money-losing businesses, like poor people, don't pay income tax. But they have to pay the Social Security payroll tax whether they're making money or not. New small businesses have to start shelling out for Social Security as soon as they hire their first worker. Other companies struggling to avoid bankruptcy get no reprieve from FICA. Taken together, both parts of the FICA tax amount to a 14.3 percent penalty on the decision of a company to hire a worker and of a worker to take a job.

An amazing number of otherwise intelligent people still cling to the illusion that Social Security is like an annuity—that the money you get back is just the return on the money you put in. Mechanically, this is simply wrong. Today's FICA payments pay for today's Social Security checks—they aren't saved and invested. And even metaphorically, the "insurance" idea is a fraud. The money that today's retirees paid into the Social Security system over their lifetimes, invested at a normal rate of return, would pay for less than one-sixth of the benefits a typical retiree enjoys. But because of higher FICA tax rates and benefit reductions scheduled for after the turn of the century, today's younger workers will be lucky to get as much out of the system as they put into it.

Democrats must face the true nature of Social Security. It isn't an annuity program. It's a transfer program. Democrats need not apologize for supporting government transfer programs. But this one is a regressive transfer financed by a regressive tax. The average income per capita of the elderly is 15 percent higher than that of the general population. From 1973 to 1984, while the average non-elderly

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family's real income stayed about the same, the average elderly couple's real income rose rapidly—thanks to ever-growing Social Security benefits and cost-of-living adjustments. Families struggling—and failing—to keep up with inflation have paid more and more FICA taxes so the elderly could keep doing better than inflation. The longer Democrats fear reforming this program, the more younger people will vote Republican.

Social Security taxes should be cut. In principle, Social Security should be paid for like any other program: through the income tax. This makes even more sense now that we are about to get a broad-based new income tax system. Increasing income tax rates to raise the same amount of money now raised through FICA would make the overall tax system fairer and more efficient. Most people would face lower combined tax rates than they do now. Simply cutting the FICA tax would achieve the same purpose. But if revenues are cut, benefits must be cut as well. The reforms of the past few years, which have brought the Social Security system into financial and actuarial balance, must not be squandered.

Cutting Social Security benefits brings Democrats face-to-face with their central philosophical challenge. Do they have a principled belief in activist government to help the needy and promote the general welfare? Or are they simply protectors of current programs and constituencies? The issue is not the destruction of Social Security. The issue is the salvation of it. There is no justification—at least no liberal justification—for treating as sacrosanct an arrangement that, on average, takes money from those with less and gives it to those with more.

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart

1. CRACKING OPEN — 2 — 2

The extent of drug panic in U.S. society can be measured less by the fruitless blockade of New York harbor, or by the fiasco of the DEA presence in Mexico, or by the crisis perceived in the schools, or by the Bolivian misadventure, and more by the current ad campaign of a Washington moving company. Your furnishings will be moved, the ads promise, by a van line all of whose employees have been subjected to drug tests.

2. GAS MASK — — — 1

It has taken an entirely new kind of natural disaster to get Cameroon into the U.S. media. The last time may have been 30 years ago, when its independence movement was branded as communist. While events there may rarely rate priority treatment, the gas story is a fine example of black Africa getting U.S. attention *only* in times of calamity, crisis, or egregious political buffoonery. This is precisely the reason those nations are clamoring for the so-called New World Information Order.

3. LOW FRONTIER — — — 1

If there's an *Airport '86*, it will concentrate not on in-flight emergencies, but on whether the airline itself will survive a given flight. In the course of the great shakeout in the sky, cancellations are running in the hundreds, and airlines big and small are threatening to disappear off the screen. The Frontier case, in which an airline disappeared overnight leaving behind dazed, would-be passengers, is merely the latest in a series of such spectacles.

4. POST-MORTEM — — — 1

Treatment of events such as Oklahoma's post office massacre, reported in withering detail, is by now to be expected. But the fact is that unless the victims of mass murderers die at the same time, such stories get little attention anymore. There is, for example, a serial killer at large in Los Angeles who may have murdered close to 30 victims, and the story is getting virtually no national play at all.

5. AFTER THE BILL IS OVER — 1 — 2

Reports on the ramifications of tax revision continue to play loudly. Much of the attention points out the dangers of revision, or suggests ways one can still avoid taxation. What is fascinating about this deluge is that such in-depth coverage of proposed changes at an earlier stage might have helped elicit public reaction to the bill while it was more malleable.

6. WHAT IS TO BE UNDONE? — — — 1

The Soviets have released a Chernobyl report that Western experts suggest is complete. A gargantuan WWII memorial—roundly disliked by many Russians—has been halted. Even pre-revolutionary place names are being revived. Gorbachev, for whatever reason, seems to be responding to at least some pressures from beneath for a change.

7. DOIN' THE VATICAN GAG — — — 1

Father Charles Curran's gagging by the Vatican has again brought into relief the apparent gulf between the conservative Church, a similarly conservative U.S. priesthood, and the beliefs of many American Catholics. Polls indicate that a majority of U.S. Catholics agree with Curran's "nuanced" teachings on sexual matters, and that the U.S. Catholic community has been quietly drifting away from Church teachings on personal and sexual matters for years.

8. A SUMMER PLACE — — — 1

Where did Americans go this summer, since they didn't go to Europe? Not the beach; shore resorts never got the crowds they had geared up for. Not the national parks; they actually advertised their availability. Not Washington, though it too had expected an influx. Americans, it seems, hardly went anywhere. As for the autumn, traditional European destinations for Americans are reportedly heavily booked.

9. VERITAS ODIUM PARIT — — — 1

Coverage of Harvard's 350th anniversary this month is an interesting reflection of U.S. confusion about its traditional elites. The country has never really decided whether it admires them for their wealth and position, or has contempt for them and their ivory towers. Reports keep picking away at the show-biz aspects of the Harvard anniversary celebration, and such oddities as the school's demand that reporters identify their race before getting credentials.

10. BITCHES FROM OUTER SPACE — — — 1

Female Rambos have been trying to creep onto the nation's screens since the rise of salable militant feminism. Past efforts such as *Ms. 45* and *Lipstick* haven't burned up the box office. Nor is this summer's *Extremities* opening well. The big success, strangely enough, is *Aliens*, which is being interpreted in some quarters as a progressive film with a matriarchal subtext.

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"The religious Left is the only Left we've got." — *The Nation*

Writing in a recent issue of *The Nation*, Michael Ferber argues that in periods such as ours, when the secular Left is defeated or dejected, it is religious people who keep progressive social ideals alive. Currently, Ferber estimates, "of every five people actively working for progressive causes, at least three draw energy and conviction from their religious beliefs."

According to Ferber, religious people are wrestling with transcendent questions progressives need to debate (but often evade): What is the *good* society? Are there means to get there that don't spoil the ends? How do we summon the courage to act, especially when many are disheartened and action involves sacrifice? Moreover, lest the current religious revival be surrendered to the political Right, "it is our task to talk values, to talk ideals, to talk transcendence," says Ferber.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW (an ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics) agree wholeheartedly. We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments that result in progressive social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King Jr., Thomas Merton, Cesar Chavez, and Archbishop Romero.

We are fascinated by the challenge religious activists have been posing to poverty, plant closings, apartheid, nuclear weapons, the arms race, and U.S. belligerence in Central America.

We are amused that a high-ranking general stated at the National War College that "the greatest challenge to all that we do now comes from within the churches," and that White House operative Patrick Buchanan complained that religious activists "have helped energize the Left to an extent that it has not been energized since the Vietnam War."

We are gladdened by the way the Catholic bishops have, in their pastoral letters, placed economic democracy on the national agenda and nuclear disarmament on the nation's conscience.

But we are dismayed that few on the conventional Left are aware of what religious people are doing and saying. If, as Ferber says, the religious Left is the only real Left there is, it behooves progressives of all persuasions to inquire into the sources of resilience, energy, and social passion found among religious progressives.

We believe the secular Left needs the religious Left as never before. Those who write for us include diverse people like Robert N. Bellah, Christopher Lasch, J.M. Cameron, Eileen Egan, Henri J.M. Nouwen, John C. Cort, Norman Lear, Robert Coles, Juli Loesch, Richard J. Mouw, and Gordon C. Zahn. We bat around the full range of theological, ethical, and social issues, and defy easy pigeonholing. *Newsweek* has called us "thoughtful and often cheeky," Martin E. Marty finds us "lively," and the *Library Journal* has predicted we will "doubtless command increasing attention." If you think it's time to end the isolation of the secular Left from the religious Left, subscribe today!

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But if Social Security is largely responsible for the current prosperity of the elderly, is it fair to use that prosperity as an excuse to cut their benefits? Obviously not, if the cuts plunge millions of old people back into poverty. However, there are any number of ways to prune the excesses of Social Security without touching the benefits of those who depend on it to keep them out of poverty. One is to tax benefits. Under the lower rates of the new tax code, this may not bring in as much revenue as before, but it would still be a step in the right direction. It is even more justified now that reform has made sure that the tax system won't touch poor people.

Sometime soon, someone is going to make an issue of Social Security and the regressive, job-destroying tax that finances it. The Democrats in recent years have done a lot of talking about economic fairness and economic growth. Will they grab this issue, or will they fumble it away like the last one?

NOTEBOOK

□ GONE TODAY, HERE TOMORROW: Senior editor Ann Hulbert, who has been with TNR since 1978, begins a year's leave of absence next week. Ann will be writing a biography of the writer Jean Stafford on a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are pleased to announce that Louis Menand, an assistant professor of English at Princeton, will be joining us for the next 12 months to share the literary duties. Luke Menand has recently written essays for TNR about critical legal studies and about the novelist Ralph Ellison.

□ LEGAL EAGLES: The Association of Soviet Lawyers represents no opinions and no interests that are separate from those of the government. It helps uphold a state system that inherently denies the existence of a rule of law recognizable to the Western tradition. ASL's publications include the notorious "White Book," co-authored by the Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Public, which argues for restricting the emigration of Soviet Jews. Another ASL target is Amnesty International, which has the temerity to demand that Soviet political prisoners be accounted for. Now the American Bar Association has issued a "Declaration of Cooperation" with the ASL. It begins, curiously enough, with the ringing phrase, "Being mutually pledged to advance the rule of law in the world . . ." Whatever the importance of "dialogue" with the people of the Soviet Union, this agreement bestows legitimacy on one of the more pernicious organs of Soviet state repression. It has damaged the ABA's reputation, and the longer it is maintained, the greater that damage will be.

□ WELCOME BACK: The saga of Choichiro Yatani is the latest absurdity of the McCarren-Walter Act, the 1952 law that bars "undesirables" from entering the United States. The law has been used to keep out people ranging from left-wing author Gabriel García Márquez to Salvadoran death squad leader Roberto d'Aubuisson. But Yatani did not even have political notoriety. He is a 40-year-old teacher and doctoral candidate who moved from Japan to Long Island in 1977. In July he attended an academic conference in the Netherlands. When he returned he was detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which claimed to have evidence that he had engaged in subversive activities and belonged to a communist group while a university student in the 1960s. Yatani denied all the allegations. (He says he was arrested once in a demonstration against the Vietnam War.) After a month in jail, during which the INS and the State Department never showed him the evidence against him, Yatani was freed. But the law barring visitors to the United States on the basis of their political beliefs remains on the books, to be erratically enforced in the future. Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts has introduced legislation to repeal this foolish law.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

BUCHANAN ON TOP

ON A NORMAL Monday at the White House, President Reagan and eight or ten members of his senior staff gather in the Cabinet Room for an "issues lunch." On June 16 one of the issues briefly discussed was Daniel Manion, the Reagan nominee for a federal appeals judgeship who had run into fierce opposition from Senate Democrats. The overwhelming sentiment toward Manion among the senior staff was indifference: a major presidential effort to salvage his nomination probably wasn't worth the trouble. The latest count by the White House's congressional liaison office showed that Manion had only 35 certain votes, a pathetic number considering that Reagan's party controls the Senate.

Only one aide was talking up the critical need to get Manion through the Senate. That was Patrick J. Buchanan, the communications director and often a lonely voice of hard-line conservatism at the White House. Suddenly, after an offhand comment by Reagan, the balance of opinion shifted dramatically. "You know," the president said, "those guys who are after Manion, they're really after me." Reagan turned to William Ball, the chief congressional lobbyist. "Have you told them that, Will?" he said. At this, Buchanan glanced at Chief of Staff Donald T. Regan, whom Buchanan had been urging for days to crank up a campaign on Manion's behalf. Regan acknowledged the time had come. That Saturday, the president devoted his national radio address to defending Manion as part of a full-blown White House effort that saved, just barely, the nomination.

Perhaps Manion would have won confirmation without support from Buchanan. Perhaps the White House would have backed Manion fully anyway. Whatever the case, Buchanan made White House intervention—and thus

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Manion's ultimate confirmation—far more likely. After 18 months at the White House, Buchanan has finally worked himself into a position of real influence. He has done it by working closely with Regan, laying down the case for unswerving conservatism and priming him to be receptive if the president signals agreement.

It happened again with Reagan's July 22 speech on South Africa. Weeks before the address, Buchanan sent Reagan a copy of an article in the September 1985 *Commentary* by Paul Johnson, the British conservative. Johnson argued that the most effective agent of racial change in South Africa is capitalism, and that disinvestment is a "cruel absurdity." If it managed to harm, say, the South African mining industry, that would merely benefit the Soviet Union, he wrote. The article, in effect, played on Reagan's own beliefs about South Africa. When he was given a draft of his speech, he responded, "I like it, but I want it more in the direction of the *Commentary* article." The final version of the speech quoted copiously from the Johnson article.

WELL BEFORE Reagan got a draft, Buchanan had taken control of the speech. The initial outline was drafted at the State Department and sent to the National Security Council at the White House. The NSC wouldn't let Buchanan see it or a second draft from State, knowing he'd be furiously opposed. He obtained a bootlegged copy of the third draft, 16 pages long and filled with what he described to an aide as "relentless Boer-bashing." Buchanan tossed out that speech and substituted his own. He kept nothing but the rough structure and such items as the call for release of all political prisoners and of Nelson Mandela, whom the speech was careful not to put in the political prisoner category. Once Reagan gave his approval of Buchanan's speech, the State Department version was dead.

There was a final Buchanan touch. On the morning of the speech, he and national security adviser John Poindexter, who had also opposed the State Department drafts, met in Regan's corner office at the White House to go over the final version. Poindexter asked for a small change in the text. Buchanan said it would be fine if another change were made as well. He inserted a sentence that was aimed at the African National Congress, the black nationalist group in South Africa, some of whose leaders are communists. Although genuine black nationalists have a role, the Buchanan addition said, "The South African government is under no obligation to negotiate the future of the country with any organization that proclaims a goal of creating a Communist state and uses terrorist tactics and violence to achieve it." In the speech Reagan used every word.

The biggest triumph of Buchanan's influential summer was congressional approval of military aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. On this one, he showed resourcefulness and a small ego. Remember, his role in the failed effort to get military aid last spring was to make the issue bitterly confrontational and highly partisan. House members, he wrote on the *Washington Post* op-ed page, had a choice: vote with Reagan (and for aid), or vote with Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega (and against aid). Some Democrats insisted that Buchanan's approach made it easier for Democrats to vote against aid. Among the critics was Bernard Aronson, a former White House speechwriter for Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. "I think Pat Buchanan's approach was a disaster to the administration and to the Democrats he attacked," Aronson told the House subcommittee on Western Hemispheric affairs on April 8. He said a bipartisan effort was needed to win support for aiding the *contras*.

Administration officials who have been zinged on Capitol Hill usually don't go out of their way to praise their critics. But Buchanan called Aronson, whom he knows slightly, thanking him for backing *contra* aid and noting that "you took a shot at me." Aronson explained that Reagan ought to give a bipartisan speech that would deal with legitimate Democratic complaints about past American errors in Central America and human rights abuses by the *contras*. OK, said Buchanan, how about bringing me an outline? Aronson did, and Buchanan liked it. On a presidential trip to Parris Island, South Carolina, in late May, Buchanan got approval from Regan and Poindexter for a bipartisan, non-confrontational strategy if enough votes weren't in hand a week or so before the next roll call on *contra* aid. A White House speech was drafted for that contingency. When Aronson found it inadequate, Buchanan said, "How would you do it differently?" Aronson wrote one. A few days before the scheduled vote, the White House was stuck at 210 votes, not a House majority. The centerpiece of its final push was Aronson's speech. This time, the White House got 221 votes, and won.

Despite the victories, Buchanan has hardly become the consummate White House operator. He's a klutz in personnel matters, as he showed in the firing of Bentley Elliott, the chief White House speechwriter, and the hiring of a replacement. Regan was angry last spring when Elliott managed to get on the president's desk a pro-*contra* speech he'd written. Like Regan, Buchanan favored a different speech, one by speechwriter Tony Dolan, and he acquiesced in Elliott's dismissal. Buchanan recommended Peggy Noonan, Elliott's assistant, for the job. Regan said no. At that point, Buchanan turned to Terry Eastland, an able writer and the chief spokesman for Attorney General Edwin Meese. Regan said yes. But the other speechwriters told Buchanan they didn't want Eastland on board, and Buchanan passed the news on to Eastland, without promising to quell the mutiny. Eastland, who had tentatively agreed to take the job, backed out. The position is still vacant.

It may not be filled when Buchanan leaves the White House. How soon is that? Nobody knows, not even Buchanan. He hasn't been job hunting, but when he quit journalism to join Reagan's staff, his plan was to stay two years. That would mean a February 1987 departure. He might make that. He has only two major items on his agenda now. One is short-term, screwing up the White House's courage for a veto of legislation imposing economic sanctions against South Africa. He's already conferred about this with New Right leader Howard Phillips, officials of the Heritage Foundation, and John Sears, the Washington lawyer who works for the South African government.

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His long-term goal consists of keeping Star Wars alive and well. This means staying around through the fall, and maybe, if the summit meeting in Washington between Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is delayed, until well into 1987. Buchanan plans to be around for the summit, if only to use his influence against those in the administration who see Star Wars as an arms control bargaining chip. Six months ago, Buchanan's allies in the conservative movement despaired of his ever having any influence. Given his success this summer, they can quit worrying.

FRED BARNES

POSTCARD MANAGUA

SHARKS IN THE LOBBY

I SHOULD HAVE known what I was in for. The recent Harvard graduate sitting to my left on the plane to Nicaragua informed me that it was quite proper for the Sandinistas to shut down *La Prensa*. In fact, she added vehemently, they should have done it a long time ago. Ah, my first *internacionalista*.

The *internacionalistas* are the hundreds of foreign supporters of the Sandinistas who troop through Nicaragua each month. Whole layers of Sandinista bureaucrats seem to do nothing but meet with them. Some *internacionalistas* come for a week of whirlwind meetings and visits to model schools and farms. Some stay years to build the revolution. Some work a bit as journalists, picking up jobs as stringers that provide good clips, high adventure, and the chance for a memorable love affair with a photographer or Sandinista.

The center of *internacionalista* activity—and most everything else that happens in town—is the Hotel Intercontinental, an eyesore shaped like an Aztec pyramid that miraculously survived the 1972 earthquake and has since dominated the underdeveloped landscape around it. In his later years, Howard Hughes is said to have commandeered an entire floor for his personal use. You wouldn't know it to look at the place now. The "Inter," largely owned by the Sandinista government but still connected to the worldwide Intercontinental chain, has none of the sparkle or conspicuous consumption of the big hotels in Guatemala City or San Salvador. The staff is helpful enough, but the rooms in the rear come with notices barring guests from taking pictures of the military installation next door, and the swimming pool has leaves in it. It's hard to know for sure whether the rooms are bugged but the automatic elevators come with attendants who may be listening in—or just enjoying a featherbed job. Either way, the elevators take their time.

You know those stories about the presumptuous New York reporter who goes abroad for a week and spends most of it sitting at the hotel? I plead partially guilty. If Managua were a play, the "Inter" would be the set. One night I saw Tomás Borge, the powerful interior minister, stop by for a drink with a dozen AK-47-toting guards in tow. They all smiled as the pianist in the buffet room played Chopin "Preludes" over and over. Later I saw a group of Iowa clergymen pleading with the Sandinistas to buy some wheat, and an "I'm-just-curious" parole officer from Chicago somehow got permission to sleep in the lobby. While I was there, a hotel employee was carted away by the police for waving a tiny American flag obtained from the caterer for the American Embassy's Fourth of July party. (I didn't even know about that one until I read a *Miami Herald* account of it after going home.)

The Inter has more lobster than water. As in most restaurants in the city, lobster is the cheapest and best thing to eat. I wished they had it for breakfast. Unfortunately, that cannot make up for the fact that two days a week showers, faucets, and toilets go dry from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. The only exception was a stretch earlier this year, when Jimmy Carter stayed at the hotel, and the government, fearing photos of an unshaven former American president flashed around the globe, kept the water on all week. The Sandinistas point to the water shortage as just another example of the hardships that have to be endured under pressure from the United States. Still, it struck me that body odor is one problem that can hardly be blamed on the *contras*, who are a long way from getting their act together enough to sabotage water supplies.

A BETTER EXPLANATION is that with the economy a shambles, the Sandinistas have trouble organizing logistics. The toilet paper shortage has become so serious that the extra rolls one finds in stalls are now often locked inside their metal containers. Doña Violeta Chamorro, the famous and elegant widow of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro (the legendary anti-Somoza editor of *La Prensa*), is not the only one who has taken to carrying around a roll in her purse.

La Prensa is no longer available in the Inter lobby—or anywhere. It was never a great paper, but it did stand up courageously to the Sandinistas. Now it has been silenced by the government. The rest of the Nicaraguan newspaper rack, however, is still dominated by the Chamorros. *Barricada*, the Sandinista party paper, is run by Doña Violeta's youngest son, Carlos. *El Nuevo Diario*, the pro-Sandinista paper founded in 1980 when the staff of *La Prensa* split into factions, is edited by her dour brother-in-law Xavier, whose explanation for the closing of *La Prensa* ("They always wrote about the negative in Nicaragua; never the positive") makes him sound like a Central American Reed Irvine. The *New York Times* is now available, as are English translations of Muammar Qaddafi's *Green Book*, Emily Post's *Imaginative Meals*, and two-year-old issues of *Better Homes and Gardens.*

It's hard to know what's missing from the local newspapers. In Somoza's day, according to Doña Violeta, *La Prensa*'s editors would always indicate where in the paper censorship had occurred by printing a picture of Ava Gardner.

continued on page 14

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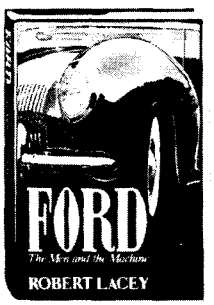

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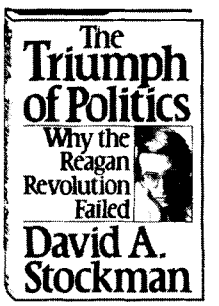

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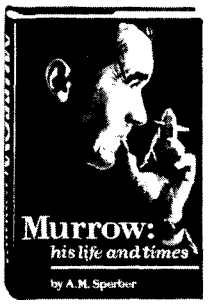

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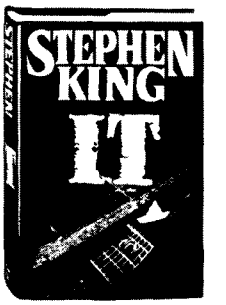

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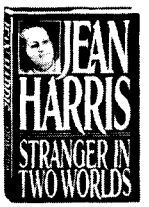

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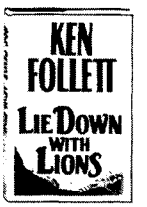

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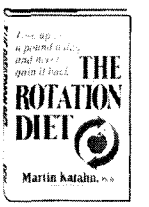

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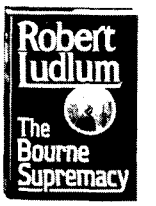

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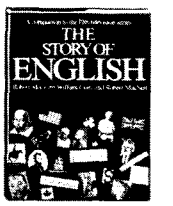

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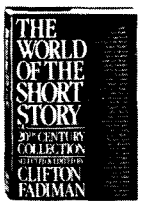

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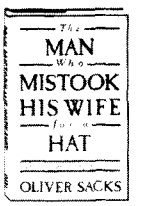

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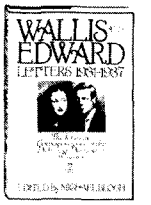

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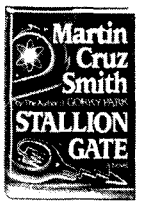

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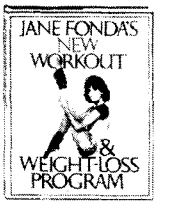

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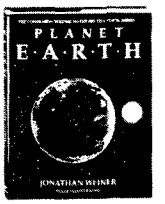

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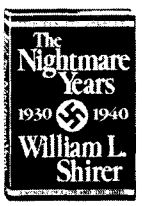

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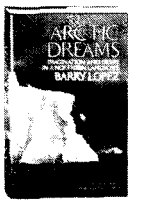

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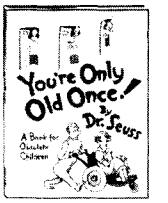

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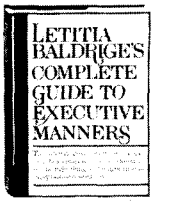

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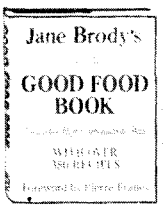

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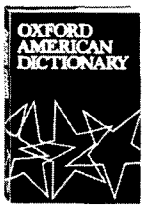

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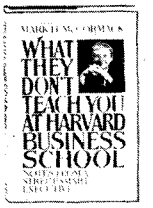

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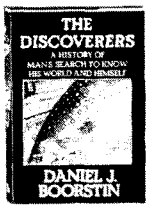

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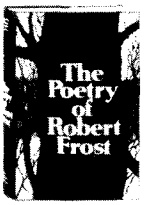

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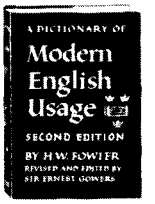

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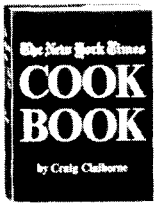

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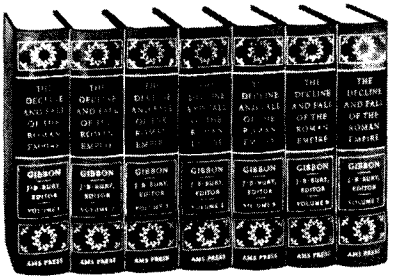

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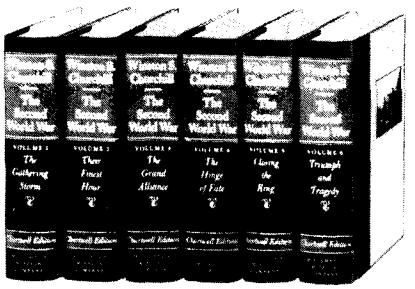

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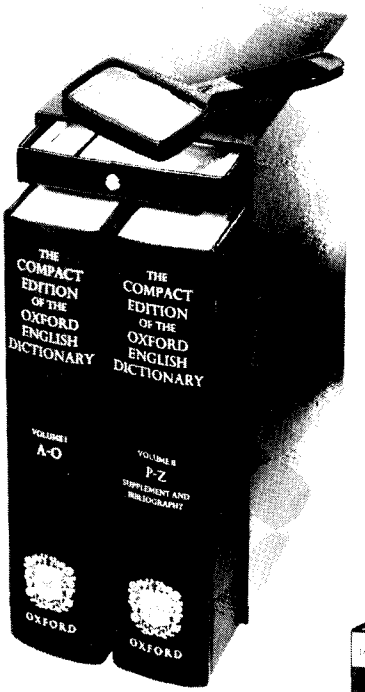
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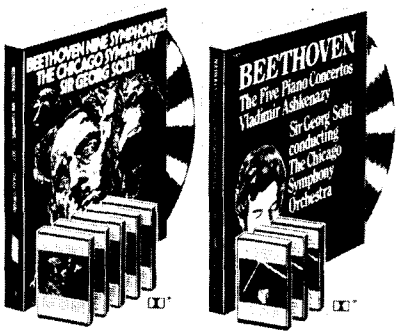
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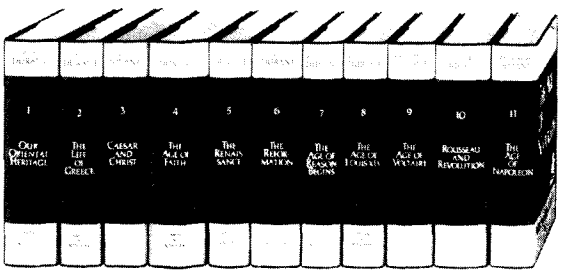

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"Whenever the people saw Ava Gardner, they thought of censorship," she says. "It made her a big star here." The Sandinistas censored even Ava. With no opposition paper, dissent is heard only in the streets, particularly in the Eastern Market, the open-air center of black market capitalism.

One fixture on the circuit for visiting reporters is Omar Cabezas, the high-ranking interior ministry official whose book about his experiences as a revolutionary (by legend, partly dictated in bed to a series of lovers) is a huge best seller, now published in 23 countries. I didn't know Omar, but he knew I was there within hours of my arrival. He didn't think much of the article I was working on about the closing of *La Prensa*. "*Qué original*" ("How original"), he told a dinner companion.

Omar is a charming world-weary luncheon companion who seems to realize he's wasted a lot of time on American liberals. In the wake of the *contra* aid vote, he now sees Democratic and Republican politicians as essentially the same: "Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola—they both mix with rum." The reporters who cover or visit Nicaragua he likes very much. It's the editors in the United States he can't stand. He tells me two long stories about reporters from "Good Morning America" and *USA Today* who came down and did terrific pieces on him, only to have them killed back home. I'm apparently not destined to be part of a third such story. As his driver took us back to the hotel (my colleague and I crammed in the back with the machine guns), Omar smilingly held up a hand to show me two numbers he had written during lunch on his palm. The "15" represented the number of times I had asked about repression in Nicaragua; the "3" the number of times I asked about the *contras*.

SANDINISTA PROPAGANDA has a defter touch with foreigners than with the local population. The Departamento de Agitación y Propaganda (DAP)—at least they've skipped the Orwellian formalities—won't win any Clio awards. This summer the DAP produced a TV ad that crudely juxtaposed shots of recently expelled Bishop Vega with shots of Nicaraguan civilians killed by the *contras* in a recent mine explosion near the Honduran border. The voice-over intoned "Judas, Judas," and suggested Vega had blood on his hands. Up in the friendly NBC suite at the Inter, Gossip Central, I hear that the Sandinista government tried to buy footage of Vega from American networks, but no one was interested.

Some of the local stringers would likely have made the sale without hesitation. One NBC radio stringer was seen loudly singing the Sandinista national anthem at a recent rally. When I was there, the big debate was over whether stringers, mostly photographers, were wrong to have agreed to wear the Sandinista army uniform while out covering military exercises. The stringers may set the tone of press behavior, asking easy questions of Sandinistas and making speeches at press conferences. But it should be noted that the full-time reporters, the ones who provide most of what gets reported from Nicaragua, do not usually participate in such nonsense. In fact, some of them are annoyed that the stringers will not take time out from schmoozing with their friends in the government to join them in protesting the daylong bureaucratic headaches entailed in covering a single press conference.

Meanwhile, down in the lobby it was time to schmooze with another usual Sandinista suspect: Sofia Montenegro, a sometime *Barricada* writer, already the subject of profiles in *Rolling Stone* ("Sofia's Choice") and CBS's "West 57th." Sofia is young, pretty, very bright, genuinely funny, willing to pose in fatigues, and most important of all for the visiting TV crews, speaks good English, a rarity. She is also foul-mouthed, has an American stringer boyfriend, likes nightclubs, and hates the United States. Most Sandinista leaders deny being Marxist-Leninists; it just plays into Reagan's hands. When I asked Sofia, I got a look of disgust. What a ridiculous question! How could I have listened to what she had been saying for the last 15 minutes and not know the answer? (Yes, by the way, but she says a nationalist first.)

THAT WAS NOT a popular line of questioning with *internacionalistas*, whose ceaseless cheerleading gives responsible criticism of the *contras* a bad name. Even the more conservative, Sandinista-despising regular reporters (and there are some) don't believe pressure from the *contras* will cause the populace to rise up and throw out the government—in other words, the American game plan. But in the hotel bar, they are shouted down by empty-headed rationalizers of the Sandinistas, who in discussing the regime's abuses easily cross the line from explanation to justification. The lounge chair combatants can only agree on one thing: the bloodshed to come.

There is, too, a conspiracy of silence at work in the lobby of the Inter. Reporters say ssshhh!—don't mention that you went and talked to the American ambassador, Harry Bergold, because—ssshhh!—he's no fan of the pro-*contra* policy, doesn't think it will work, and doesn't mind telling that to all visitors, off the record, but if it got back to Jesse Helms—ssshhh!—Bergold could get fired, and then where would we all be for a source? I figured that if every stringer knew the story on Bergold, then Washington did too. And when I actually met him I found a shrewd diplomat working on about six levels at once to manipulate me, peddle the administration line, and stay somewhat faithful to the truth. But of course I can't tell you what we discussed. Off the record, you see. Wouldn't want the reporters back at the hotel to think I was blowing their source.

An American ambassador with backing in Washington who thinks the policy he is supporting probably can't work. Perhaps the only freshwater lake in the world—Lake Nicaragua—known to contain bull sharks. A political situation where everything Reagan says helps the Sandinistas, and everything the Sandinistas say helps Reagan. Lobsters, but no way to boil them. *Qué original*.

JONATHAN ALTER

Jonathan Alter writes about the media for *Newsweek*.

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Whose body is it, anyway?

SPARE PARTS

BACK IN THE early 1600s, John Donne was fascinated by the difficulties that would confront God on the day of resurrection. Everyone who had ever lived would get his or her body back. How, Donne wanted to know, would God manage it? He would not settle for vague assurances—he wanted details. "In what wrinkle, in what furrow, in what bowel of the earth, ly all the graines of the ashes of a body burnt a thousand years since?" And there would be knottier problems than locating mislaid parts. God would have to face the fact that "mans buried flesh hath brought forth grasse, and that grasse fed beasts, and those beasts fed men, and those men fed other men." Today, more than 350 years later, some have reluctantly returned to the controversy over whose body is whose. However, in keeping with the spirit of the age, the dispute now centers not on theology but on science, on lawsuits, and on dreams of cash bonanzas. It is biotechnology that has resurrected the debate, but despite the scientific trappings, the modern version is every bit as strange, as charmingly loony in tone, as its predecessor.

Research in modern biology laboratories routinely requires the use of human cells, usually grown in a small, plastic dish, and of DNA, the hereditary material found in the cells of humans and all other living creatures. Ordinarily no one gives a passing thought to the donors of those cells or of that DNA, just as no one tries to locate the particular trees that became the book one is reading. In nearly every case, the cells will never yield anything of commercial value. But lotteries do have winners. In exceptional circumstances, one person's cells will have a special property that makes them uniquely valuable. What happens, for example, if scientists examining a person's cells find a protein that can be made into an anti-cancer drug? Should the profits go to the patient, whose cells were essential to the project's success? Or to the researchers, who transformed material destined for the trash into a valuable product? Whose body is it, anyway?

Consider the case of John Moore, a recovered cancer patient who was treated at the UCLA Medical Center. His doctor attacked the cancer by removing Moore's diseased spleen, and then carried out research on cells derived from the organ. He eventually developed a line of cells that proved to be commercially viable. UCLA patented the cell line, a biotechnology company developed a product based on it, and Moore sued. The case is in litigation. Several other related cases have been settled out of court, and more are likely. All involve such questions as whether patients have a right to be informed that their doctor may develop a product line from a sample of their blood or tissue.

In congressional hearings, in learned journals, in expert symposiums, and in courtrooms, people are trying to thrash out answers. Odd as the questions sound, they are important. Biotechnology is big business and getting bigger. According to a Commerce Department forecast, the market for genetically engineered products, under $100 million today, will increase to tens of billions by the 1990s. Nearly 300 biotechnology firms have come into being to fight for a share of that booty. Lots of money and many lawsuits may lie ahead, which will bring headlines and notoriety. Scientists tend to dismiss the body parts debate as absurd, but they should be wary. Their funding, their stature, and their independence depend on the public's trust, and that support is fragile. If people suspect that scientists are cashing in on materials that don't belong to them, will they still be willing to donate blood and organs—and money?

BUT THE GRAVITY of the issues is often belied by the bemused, even fanciful, tone of the discussion. Experts from around the nation convened several months ago at a symposium sponsored by the Office of Technology Assessment, a non-partisan government agency established in 1972 to advise Congress on technical subjects. Before long, the panelists had been diverted from discussing "Patients' Rights in Human Biological Materials" and found themselves instead fighting the Great Cookie War. Thomas Murray, a medical ethicist at the University of Texas, likened a patient who had allowed researchers to use a sample of his tissue to a cook who had shared a prize recipe with a neighbor: "You make a gift of [family recipes] to your neighbor. And two years later, they turn out to be the heart of a best-selling cookbook that your neighbor has published. . . . Should you feel offended? Have you been done an injustice? Do you have any moral claim on a share of the profits from the sales of this cookbook? I think that is the question."

Most of the others didn't. The battle raged as the eminent disputants zeroed in on cookies. Were the recipes truly unique, they wanted to know, or were they simply standard Toll House cookies with a twist? Anticipating these questions, Murray countered with others. The analogies came fast and furiously. Perhaps blood cells are more like songs, with the creator entitled to retain rights. Nope. Robert Levine, a professor of medicine at Yale Medical School, shot that down. "Intellectual property is something that we create as a matter of our own initiative. In this way, it is very, very different from blood cells or lymphocytes, which all of us are creating at this very moment without any consciousness of doing so."

Barbara Mishkin, a lawyer, warned that there would be a backlash if patients come to feel that they have been denied their rights: "If we thereby lose public confidence in the scientific enterprise, we might be confronted with—well, I suppose the worst possible case would be getting [the Federal Trade Commission] involved in it and requiring that you provide patients in a hospital with the opportunity to request return of defective parts, like what happens when you go into an automobile repair shop,

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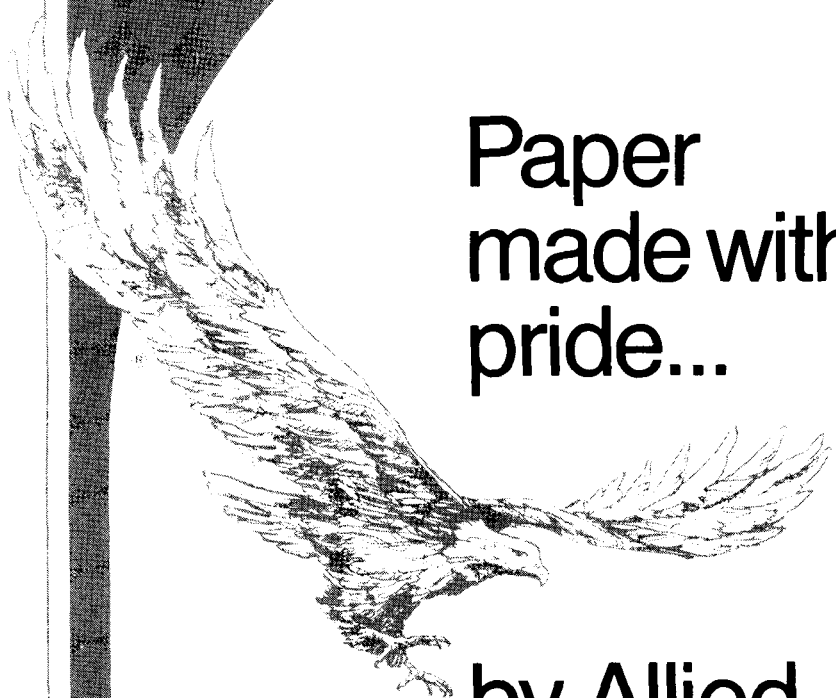

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to prove that these haven't been sold to someone else."

The marketing of body parts is not entirely uncharted territory. The law already permits the sale of blood and sperm and hair. It already forbids the sale of organs (because, notes Murray, "people just don't take kindly to the thought of an organ mogul sipping champagne next to his kidney- or heart-shaped swimming pool"). But all those cases involve "off-the-shelf" body parts. The new cases involve proteins, hormones, and the like that have been transformed, often beyond recognition, with all the newly invented tools of the biotechnologist's art.

Moreover, the established cases have to do with replenishable goods, like blood, or with functioning parts of the body, like kidneys. That doesn't help much in trying to think about bodily junk or surplus that a scientist has imbued with value. Once some bodily material has been removed, it is no longer part of us. Or is it? "I think our laws and our traditions and our ethics have been built around protecting the integrity of the body as long as the parts are intact," noted Charles McCarthy of the National Institutes of Health during the panel discussion. "I don't much care what happens to my fingernails once they are clipped, but if you start pulling them off before they are clipped, it makes a big difference."

WHETHER OR NOT we are prepared to answer the new questions, the pace of technological advance means that there is no ducking them. According to figures compiled by the House Science and Technology Committee, "In the last five years, patent applications for university-owned inventions using human biological materials increased over 300 percent as compared with the five years preceding." Half of all medical institutions have applied for such patents; half of all researchers in medical institutions use human biological materials in their research.

But continue to expect more heat than light from the argument over how those "human biological materials"—blood, sweat, tears, and the rest—should be used. Immense practical difficulties further obscure philosophical and ethical questions that are more than murky enough on their own. As Robert Levine noted, "Most of the time when we are working to develop things from what is called human materials, we don't know who the human materials came from. The researcher gets the materials from the surgical pathologist, and the surgical pathologist, in the interest of preserving the patient's privacy, does not tell the name or does not attach any identifier to the tissue. And so there is no way to find out anything."

Moreover, the problem of anonymity is compounded by the problem of numbers. In many cases, biological research requires pooling the contributions of hundreds or thousands of subjects. Deciphering the structure of one hormone, for example, required taking the pituitary glands from 7,000 cadavers. "Should we go back and offer to share the proceeds with the estates of 7,000 dead people?" asked Levine. "I am trying to give you a sense of the numbers involved."

Those aspects of the body parts conundrum also occurred to John Donne three centuries ago: "The ashes of an Oak in the Chimney, are no Epitaph of that Oak, to tell me how high or how large that was. . . . The dust of great persons graves is speechlesse too, it sayes nothing, it distinguishes nothing. . . . And when a whirle-winde hath blowne the dust of the Church-yard into the church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the Church into the Church-yard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again and to pronounce: 'This is the Patrician, this is the noble flowre, and this the yeomanly, this the Plebeian bran'?" Congress, presumably, or one of the federal agencies regulating biotechnology. Look for Donne's perplexity, but don't expect his pithiness.

EDWARD DOLNICK

Edward Dolnick, formerly a science writer at the *Boston Globe*, now lives and writes in Washington.

The political psychology of terror.

LENIN'S GUFFAW

"HIS GUFFAW at the thought of those massacred made my blood run cold," was Bertrand Russell's reaction to Lenin when they spoke together. This seems to indicate a cultural difference of some importance.

It has been rare for a representative of the Western liberal culture to be given so direct an insight into the attitudes of a Soviet leader. Lenin's successors more commonly spare the stomachs of queasy Westerners by claiming that they too are really more or less liberal and generally against unnecessary killing. This accords with our parochial presumption that our ways are the rational ones, and that those from a different culture are really much like us. So it has had considerable success.

Lenin's early writings on revolution are full of extraordinary detail about how to kill policemen and use every conceivable weapon from rifles and bombs to knuckledusters and boiling water. These passages cannot be paralleled in the works of practical leaders of insurrection such as Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg. (The latter was already speaking of Lenin's "Tatar-Mongolian savagery.") In fact, we tend to forget that Lenin's tenure was extremely bloody. UNESCO had a celebration conference on "Lenin the Humanist" in Helsinki a few years ago.

In Lenin's time, the slaughter was often more or less public. Under Stalin, lapses into frankness like Lenin's to Russell were no more to be seen. Considerable effort went into denying the facts of the genocidal assault on the peasantry from 1930 to 1933, especially to the foreign audience. And the terror actions after 1936 were almost all conducted in

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silence. As noted by Nadezhda Mandelstam, the widow of perhaps the greatest poet to die in the Stalin terror, the killing became worst when it was no longer visible. Nikolai Bukharin, leader of the right-wing Communists (himself later shot), complained that the extravagant cruelty of the suppression of the peasantry resulted in "deep changes in the psychological outlook of those Communists who participated in this campaign, and instead of going mad, became professional bureaucrats for whom terror was henceforth a normal method of administration." The Party's membership had not been known for a kid-glove approach to the population even before this period.

But in a much quoted speech to Red Army graduates in 1935, Stalin told of an experience when he was in exile in Siberia. He was near a flooded ford when a peasant and some horses were swept away and drowned. The remaining peasants loudly mourned the loss of the horses, and when Stalin asked what about the man, they replied that they could always make more men, but the horses were the real loss. This attitude to human life, Stalin told his young audience, was thoroughly deplorable, and all good communists should continually bear this in mind. It was a time when he had already chalked up his first ten million corpses and was about to start on the second ten million.

To connoisseurs of hypocrisy, this is a particularly delicious morsel. But even today in Sovietological academic circles in the West, there are those who analyze moderate and humane speeches of Stalin's in order to demonstrate that he hated his subordinates going too far in slaughter!

In private, on the other hand, Stalin had no need for this humanism. The Soviet historian Roy Medvedev points out that Stalin always liked to hear accounts of the execution of his victims. And there is the story of how a few months after the first of the faked "Moscow Trials," when Grigori Zinoviev and other old comrades had been executed, Stalin gave a dinner for leading secret policemen on the anniversary of the founding of their organization. Afterwards, an account of what took place circulated in the NKVD. When everyone had drunk a fair amount, K. V. Pauker played for Stalin the part of Zinoviev being dragged off to execution. Two other officers acted the parts of wardens: Pauker hung on their arms, moaning and mouthing, then fell on his knees and held one of the wardens' boots, begging him to call Comrade Stalin. Stalin laughed heartily, and Pauker gave a repeat. By this time Stalin was nearly helpless with laughter, and when Pauker brought in a new line by raising his hands and crying, "Hear, O Israel, our God is the only God," Stalin was choking with mirth and had to signal Pauker to stop. Zinoviev was, of course, Jewish. So was Pauker, who had overseen the execution and was himself executed a year later as a Nazi spy.

STALIN PERSONALLY signed 40,000-odd death warrants. These were listed in four categories: general, military, secret police, and "wives of enemies of the people" (under which a number of widows of the purged political leaders were shot). Stalin is quoted, much earlier, as saying to some colleagues: "To choose one's victims, to prepare one's plan minutely, to slake an implacable vengeance, and then to go to bed . . . there is nothing sweeter in the world."

Even his terror operatives got worse. Eugenia Ginzburg, author of *Journey Into the Whirlwind*, speaks from experience of police interrogators: "They were all sadists, of course . . . pace by pace, as they followed one routine directive after another, they climbed down the steps from the human condition to that of beasts." The (then confidential) Central Committee circular of 1939 authorizing torture retrospectively and prospectively is couched in Stalin's inimitable personal style.

The atmosphere of gallows humor in Communist ruling circles is well conveyed by the story of a dinner given by Hungary's Stalinist dictator Matyas Rakosi. One of the guests was the president of the Republic, Arpad Szakasits, a former Social Democrat who had acted as the Communists' agent in destroying that party. At the end of the dinner two secret policemen entered and dragged Szakasits to jail. Rakosi said, "Oh, Arpad, must you go? Can't you stay for coffee?"and joined in the burst of hearty laughter that greeted this sally.

It is some consolation to hear that Rakosi, after the death of Stalin, was summoned to Moscow and was noticed in the Politburo waiting room by the police mogul Lavrenti Beria, who went up to him with a cry of, "Are you still in charge of Hungary?" pulled his tie up tight round his neck, and went off leaving him half-choked. Still, this was better than actually being hanged, as was the fate of his "liberal" Communist successor, Imry Nagy, arrested after a promise of immunity following his leadership of the Hungarian popular revolution in 1956.

OF COURSE, the sheer fun of it was not the only reason Lenin and Stalin killed people. There are various motives for massacre. In particular: hatred, such as Hitler felt for the Jews or Lenin for the bourgeoisie. And fanaticism, the notion that without terror history will go wrong (the Aztecs believed that human sacrifices were necessary to keep the sun shining). This too was important for the Nazis and Communists: doing one's duty is always pleasurable, particularly (for some) a duty that "bourgeois morality" deplores. People are totalitarian revolutionaries because, for one reason or another, they reserve the right to impose their dogmas by any means up to and including killing anyone who hampers their plans. When they act or speak otherwise, it is merely tactics.

Soviet history uniquely combines the archaic attitude to slaughter with the modern ideological stance. In public Stalin and Rakosi of course acted in the modern way. Though the number of skulls on which the Soviet order is erected would have made Tamerlane very, very happy, Stalin and his epigones preached humanism, and were widely praised for it by Western intellectuals. The deception was perfunctory, the public trials were obviously faked, the death camps attested to by many victims who eventually reached the West. But, at least in Orwell's view, this was enough. All that the Western intellectual wanted was a cover story, however inept, so that he could defend it

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all in humane terms. His real motive was the vicarious enjoyment of a terror in which, as he thought, the intellectual had at last got his hands on the whip. As we all know, the years that followed have seen overblown emotional attachment to a whole series of Leninist regimes by Western humanists who are at best lukewarm about genuine democracies.

The present Soviet Union has at its foundation between 20 and 30 million victims of the Stalinist terrors. How are we to judge the current rulers? Perhaps if they repudiated the fearful past, and apologized for the slaughter, they could broadly establish their bona fides in the mind of the West. Meanwhile, it is difficult not to ask ourselves whether their acceptance of the premature death of tens of millions of their own people is perhaps relevant to the question of whether they would mind killing similar numbers of foreigners in certain strategic circumstances. It doesn't greatly matter to the victim what his killer's precise motives may be. But Lenin's and Stalin's guffaws at terror and torture are of some interest to the rest of us, if only as a sidelight on a peculiar political psychology.

ROBERT CONQUEST

Robert Conquest is author of a number of books on Soviet subjects, including the forthcoming *The Harvest of Sorrow* (Oxford University Press).

The Perils of Publishing, I

GREAT SCOTT!

WHEN THE subject of literary agents arises, Scott Meredith's name invariably surfaces, not only because of his prestigious roster of clients (Norman Mailer's most recent novel is dedicated to him), but because of his controversial practice of charging unknown writers $250 a crack to read their novels. What particularly disturbs writers and fellow literary agents is the zeal with which Meredith tracks down his quarry. Sometimes, according to the *New York Times*, he pays the mailroom personnel of publishing companies ten cents for each writer's name they can muster ("Copy the mailroom log and send it along," one Meredith letter suggests), sometimes he buys names from small literary magazines. These writers soon receive a glitzy brochure, replete with photos of hefty checks made out to the agency by Prentice-Hall, Houghton Mifflin, Condé Nast, Walt Disney Productions, and other titans, plus the exact figures on the advances paid to such literary superstars as Mailer, Arthur C. Clarke, and Carl Sagan, all Meredith clients. The brochure says that the agency makes "a particular specialty of securing first sales for new writers," and assures the writer that there is no disgrace in paying a fee for having one's work read. Those anxious to join the Mailer-Sagan-Clarke universe must first fork over $250 to have a novel read, $150 for a magazine article, $200 for a "small" book of poetry, and $300 for a short story in a foreign language. In 1981, says *Forbes* magazine, writers paid $800,000 in reading fees to the agency.

Meredith dismisses any and all criticism of such fees. A self-styled maverick who infuriated the publishing world by introducing the mass auction several decades ago—submitting the same manuscript to a score of publishers simultaneously—Meredith says that such fees are necessary in order to maintain a large staff of professional editors looking for the next generation of "literary lions." But a former employee cited in the *New York Times* describes the reading service as "a money-making rejection industry," and others say the same.

DESPITE MEREDITH'S legitimate argument that a handful of the thousands of manuscripts his readers pore over every year do actually make it into print, there has been widespread suspicion that if you send him a proposal, he'll write back and tell you that it sounds publishable, no matter how moronic the subject, the treatment, or the letter you send. This impression was certainly strengthened in my mind not long ago when I sent the agency three of the most inane book proposals I could think of, using friends' names and addresses. The first cover letter ran like this:

> Dear Scott Meredith:
>
> I am enclosing a copy of the outline to my novel, *No Tears in the Wickiup*, for your inspection. A major in American studies in college, I have always had great sympathy for the plight of the American Indian, though I myself am a WASP and a Quaker.
>
> *Plot*:
>
> Running Buck, a Pawnee papoose, is the only survivor of a massacre by the Long Knives (cavalry). Befriended by the commanding officer of the troops, who now regrets leading the massacre, he is sent back East to a special school. He is a very good student, and is very good with numbers, and eventually gets a job as a stockbroker with Jay Gould's company. But a racist co-worker hates him, and hires a killer to murder a prominent investor with a tomahawk. All eyes and suspicions fall on Running Buck, who flees to his ancestral home. But the Indians have no use for a half-breed stockbroker and cast him out. Unable to hunt or fend for himself, he dies of exposure.
>
> *Moral*:
>
> Even when white people try to help people of other races, they just end up making things worse.

Meredith's response, written by a staff member but signed by him, came back like a shot, assuring me that the agency would be "pleased to work with you on *No Tears in the Wickiup*." He then explained the fee structure, encouraged me to send manuscript and check, and assured me that if any questions arose in the interim, he was personally available to answer them.

A couple of days later we got an even more encouraging letter after proposing a motorcycle novel:

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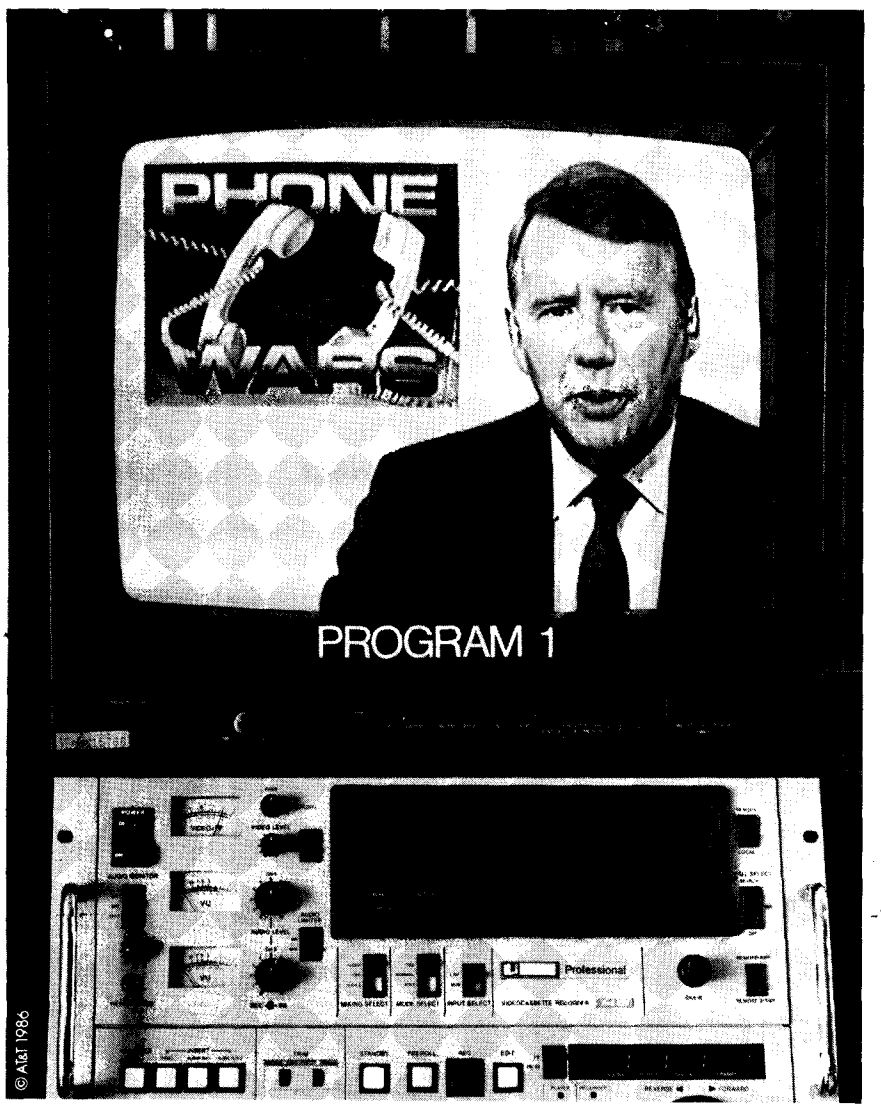

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Dear Scott Meredith,

Enclosed please find the outline of my new novel, *Bikers From Borneo*. This is not your usual outsider's view of the world of motorcycle gangs, as my brother Toby used to be in The Pagans, and is still having personal problems as a result. Although I do not take a very positive view toward motorcycle gangs, at least my novel is based on factual knowledge, and not some sort of sociological conjecture . . .

OUTLINE of *Bikers From Borneo*:

A plane crashes in Borneo, and there are only 20 survivors: 2 pretty stewardesses and 18 Hell's Angels, on their way to a reunion in Tokyo with buddies from Nam. The girls, to avoid being gang-raped, escape into the jungle only to find themselves pursued by the same headhunters that killed Michael Rockefeller 20 years ago. Will they escape from both evil groups? Will they surrender to the bikers to avoid being eaten by the headhunters? Will they trick the bikers and headhunters into killing each other? The only way you can find out is by sending for the whole book.

Meredith did: "Your novel *Bikers From Borneo* sounds very interesting, and we would most certainly be interested in considering it for publication."

NOT ACTUALLY having any of these manuscripts to submit, and not caring to be jobbed out of the $250 reading fee, I arranged with a friend of a friend who worked for Meredith to let me have a look at some of the reports the agent's staff of readers sends back to novelists who do fork over the cash. They are a priceless lot, written in a byzantinely ingenious way so that the obviously talentless writer comes away temporarily stymied in his quest for glory, but nonetheless convinced that fame and fortune await him further down the road. "This long, ambitious novel of the Merchant Marine," begins one report, "is so interesting, so complex, such a jumble of the good, the bad, the indifferent, the audacious, the brilliant, the inept, the workable, the unworkable that I barely know where to start; you're a brilliantly promising writer, Mr. Taylor, also one who is desperately unfinished and unpolished."

The first page of the reports, which range from four to 12 pages, always welcomes the neophyte to the agency, thanks him for allowing the staff to read the material, conveys to him what a joy it is to deal with such a promising newcomer, and assures him that he is a gifted, talented professional. All of the reports I received are written in Meredith's voice, and carry his name, creating the impression in the mind of the wretched hopeful that the big-time agent may have had to cancel his lunch date with Mailer, Bess Truman, or P. G. Wodehouse's widow to get back to that report on *Where's Wanda?*, *Only My Shadow Will Cry*, *And The Storm Moved Safely Out to Sea*, or my personal favorite, *Welcome to Cucamonga*. Even if the handicraft of the "writer of some real talent" happens to move "uneasily between the comic and the realistic, the documentary and the surreal," and "contains some of the worst sentences we have ever seen," including such passages as "lowering his face into the moon mellowed malleable mammae of Laurie James," it's still "always something of an occasion when we can come to work for the first time with a writer as evidently gifted as yourself."

Presumably Meredith does end up representing a fraction of these writers. But the vast majority get a polite kiss-off around page two of the report. They are told that the decision not to represent them has caused "more than routine regret," particularly since the work in question "has been the subject of much discussion at all levels of the agency," but not to worry, because writers with such "awesome fertility" will make the grade some day. Moreover, Meredith's ghostwriters do sufficient name-dropping that the spurned novelist will still feel that he has entered the pantheon of the immortals. A "Mr. McCobb" is told that he is working in the same rich vein as Joyce, Chekhov, and Hemingway, while Devon T. R. Murphy, who has finally put together his long-awaited "collected poems" (one of which reads, "If you don't roll with the punches,/you get the shit knocked out of you") is told that his work is "not unreminiscent of Berryman," just the sort of remark that may have prompted Berryman to cut short his life.

Despite the ferociously unreadable nature of all 12 manuscripts for which I obtained agency reports, Meredith's people generally managed to keep the sass and snideness to a minimum. The only truly harsh words were dealt to the writer whose protagonist was attempting to "move through the shoals of homosexuality onto its very coastline and then the shore." He was told: "You still have a tendency to reproduce stenographically that kind of sophomoric philosophizing and platitudes which have little appeal to the general readership; it's all so callow and juvenescent." Enough is enough.

THOUGH IT MAY be true that you can't tell a book by its cover, you can almost always tell one by its cover letter, and in preparing this experiment I took care to make the proposed literary works seem as knuckleheaded as possible. A writer submitting proposals as transparently ludicrous as the three cited above to most literary agents, far from getting a warm welcome, would be lucky to get a nasty rejection slip. But for $250, Meredith seems more than ready to warmly welcome anything, even such suspiciously asinine cookbooks as the one described below:

Dear Scott,

Down through the centuries, while being pursued by English soldiers, members of the Irish Republican Army have often had to eat on the run. Here, for the first time, is a list of recipes that kept them going: 63 easy-to-prepare meals that can be whipped up in less than 10 minutes, eaten in less than five. *The I.R.A. Cookbook* includes recipes for Mulligan's Stewlet, Paddy's Cakes and Irish Soda Breadcrumbs.

"We'd be delighted to work with you," Meredith wrote back. He usually is.

JOE QUEENAN

Joe Queenan is a New York writer.

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Medical Research–building a healthier future

If you've ever been treated for high blood pressure... heart disease...diabetes...or almost any health problem, medical progress based on research has already touched your life.

Because of medical research, polio no longer strikes in epidemic proportions every summer. Today about three-quarters of patients diagnosed as having Hodgkin's disease will survive five years or longer–as opposed to less than half twenty years ago. Current treatment options for people with heart disease and high blood pressure include medication that helps the body's natural regulators to control blood pressure and volume, enabling the heart to function with less strain.

Scientists are now working on new ways of treating such devastating afflictions as heart disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease. They are testing new enzyme inhibitors that may control or reverse the late complications of diabetes. Forthcoming breakthroughs in understanding biological processes and treating disease may change the quality and perhaps the length of your life.

Medical research leading to such results takes years of patient, often frustrating experimentation by many different teams throughout the public and private sectors of our scientific community. The tasks involved are not simple.

Advances in research stem from a partnership that includes federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), universities and teaching hospitals across America, and private industry laboratories. Each partner often works independently to acquire knowledge and test new concepts. They must build on the knowledge developed in all laboratories, and they often coordinate efforts in their search for answers.

Whether an idea originates in a university laboratory or starts with basic product research carried on in the private sector, important findings percolate through the entire scientific community, where each new finding serves as a building block to establish a deeper understanding of what we are and how we function.

Medical research is an expensive process. It needs steady funding for equipment and personnel–even when progress is slow. Government and industry often work with university-based scientists and the medical profession not only in the acquisition of new knowledge and the development of new treatments, but also in funding these advances.

Now more than ever, we all must do our part to help keep the flow of discoveries active and ongoing. If funding for medical research is reduced, major advances in knowledge about some of the most dreaded diseases facing us today could be delayed for years to come.

What can you do?

- *Speak up.* Let your legislators know that you want funding of biomedical research by NIH and other government agencies to be kept at the highest possible levels.
- *Contribute* to voluntary health organizations supporting disease research.

Research-based pharmaceutical companies such as Pfizer are also increasing their financial investment in research. For instance, in 1984 alone, pharmaceutical companies in the United States spent over 4 *billion* dollars on research and product development.

At the same time, we at Pfizer realize the importance of committing more than money to research. As a partner in healthcare, we are continually working to discover new ideas, test new concepts, and turn new understanding to practical and beneficial uses. Now we are working harder than ever to make sure that this nation's medical research effort receives the attention–and funding–it deserves.

For more information on the future of medical research in America, write to Health Research U.S.A., P.O. Box 3852 FR, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

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Bodybuilding's bottom line.

MUSCLEHEADS

"I'M LUCKY TO HAVE clearly delineated ab plates sliced down the middle with a sharply curved rectus" is how bodybuilding champion Rich Gaspari modestly put it while pondering his career. "One writer described my abdominals as looking like 'giant raviolis,' which pleased my mom, Gilda, no end." Bodybuilders are the first to point out that theirs isn't just another sport. It's an entire subculture.

Bodybuilding now claims almost 26 million Americans who lift weights as an occasional pastime. Seven and a half million pump iron regularly, presumably in search of that "giant raviolis" look. Some five million read magazines about it every month, and 63 percent of its new initiates are women. This summer the first body-building camp opened in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. After jogging, weight lifting is now the second most popular recreational sport in America.

As a result, the muscle industry has quietly become one of the fastest growing in the economy. The largest company, Weider Enterprises, grosses around $200 million a year, according to its president, Allan Dalfen, and has grown 40 times over in seven years. At a time when general magazine sales have been declining, those of muscle publications have been increasing by as much as 25 percent in six months. Weider's leading magazine, *Muscle and Fitness*, sells 500,000 copies a month, *Shape* some 575,000, and *Flex* and *Sports Fitness* around 150,000 each. But these booming sales figures represent only part of Weider's profits. The magazines are little more than sophisticated advertising vehicles for the other two-thirds of the business: Weider nutrition protein pills, amino acid formulas, and exercise equipment.

At the center of this empire is Joe Weider himself. A large bronze statue of him, arms folded in a knot of biceps, greets visitors at the California headquarters. His company gives prizes for the most improved employee body of the year, and press releases gush that "Everything is great at Weiderland." The word most commonly used to describe him is "vision," and Weider's guru-like status is not something he hides: "A man can only find himself in the world if he makes a commitment to something. My whole world was pulled together by one thing: bodybuilding." He is fond of invoking the triumph of the Renaissance over the Judeo-Christian view of the body as sinful. And he can't resist the odd cryptic profundity: "Life is movement; without movement, there is death." Dalfen told *Executive* magazine last year, "I control the business, but I am not the creative force behind it. I would call Joe God; but I'm a pretty good disciple, and nobody can speak directly to God."

Just how does this Canadian mystic manage to convince millions of Americans that they too want to have a sharply curved rectus (stomach) muscle? It's a compelling question but a difficult one to ask. Entering a bodybuilding gym is an initiation into a closed world, with its personal techniques, peculiar obsessions, and even private language. Humane references to parts of the body—arms, stomachs, chests—are transformed into pseudo-scientific jargon: triceps, abs, pecs. And yet in the D.C. gym I visited, the ordinary clients seemed remarkably at home. Stocky, tanned business executives breezed nonchalantly in, alongside pale, panting 20-year-olds nervously working on their shoulder width. As I spoke to the supervisor, a tired executive listlessly moved a pecs machine up and down with a gentle whirring sound. From time to time, various exhausted clients would drop by for a carbo-energizer drink. Finally Rick agreed to talk: "I'd love to look like Tom Platz and have the biggest thighs in the business," he confessed. "The first time I saw him, I guess I thought it looked gross, but now I think it looks great." Rick works out two hours a day, six times a week. Missing it is unthinkable.

The latest issue of *Flex* goes some way to explaining the subterranean attraction of such places. "The clang of Olympic plates being tossed onto the ends of bars on the various racks around me was a crazy orchestra of primeval percussion. It seemed so Stone Age, so anciently *human* in there. It intimidated me. I mean, the place pulsed." This neanderthal frenzy is mixed with a pagan religiosity: "I had a love of my task, my self-exploration, my need to meet the challenge of continual improvement. The love is the thing. You can't really stop being a bodybuilder. You know you can be better, so you hang in there. In the good times and the bad. Sickness and health. At some point, you realize you're in it for the duration."

THESE HUSHED references to the marriage ceremony reflect a romantic fervor that is widespread among the cognoscenti. Tom Platz, "Mr. Midas" to his friends and one of the top-earning professionals on the bodybuilding circuit, says: "It's a relationship and you give it that much—just you and the weights . . . together . . . you hold the weights, you feel them. It's not the same thing as a real human relationship of course, but it's a relationship all the same." Arnold Schwarzenegger is on record as likening the whole experience to orgasm. The magazines, alongside pictures of pectoral muscles bursting enthusiastically through sweatshirts, carry stories on the lines of "My First Time": "I loaded up to 205, still weeny, but that was okay. I tried to keep my mind off the tan calves—I mean the two girls—as I climbed toward my max, somewhere in the upper two hundreds. I'll hit the max . . . yeah, hit it, man, and then I'll jump up, rip off my sweatshirt and do that icy tension thing they do in the magazines. Pose them pecs, man. Squeeze 'em, crunch 'em. Blow 'em out."

Erotic is one way of describing this; auto-erotic may come closer. If sex is involved, it is in display rather than attachment. "Face it, Bucko," as *Flex* inimitably puts it, "that's *exactly* what you're wanting to do, threatened as you are by the local feminine population: give them some kind

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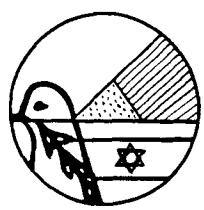

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of show." Most bodybuilders, when pressed, admit to vanity as their prime motivation. "The only place you get mirrors as surely as the gym is in strip-bars . . . . The mirror is critical," is how one philosophic gym-goer explained it. Rick admitted,"I'm egotistical, I'm narcissistic. . . . I don't care. I'm just doing it for myself." A new self-image is a constant concern. Mr. Midas talks of it as an awakening: "I desperately wanted to have an identity. It was a personal battle within me: Tom against Tom. You know, I say in my seminars that weight doesn't make the muscle grow, the mind makes the body change."

This mental renaissance, though, is also accompanied by a fear of retreat into the ranks of the puny. Any interruption in the continual round of exercise and nutrition reverses any muscular development and becomes a threat to one's newfound self-esteem. This guilt complex hasn't escaped the attention of the medical profession: "compulsive recreation" is now a recognized disorder, occurring most often in long-distance runners but suspected in many bodybuilders. New studies by psychiatrists Alayne Yates and Kevin Leehey at the University of Arizona compare it to anorexia. Both syndromes, they say, are characterized by abnormal concentration on a particular body shape and lead to obsessive eating and exercise regimens. Dr. Albert Stunkard, professor of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, described this reverse-anorexia at a recent conference of the National Institute of Mental Health as a "fascinating area of future research." In a sport where "augmentio ad absurdum" has become the prevailing ethic, there are even rumors of a new organization to control the compulsion—a kind of "Bodybuilders Anonymous." Some people, it seems, just can't stop.

BUT PSYCHOLOGICAL compulsion isn't the only thing driving them on. Weider makes sure that his nutrition and exercise products encourage and hook into the bodybuilding addiction. The message of every feature and every ad in his magazines is the same: more is always better. An editorial by Weider in *Sports Fitness* goes on: "Here's the kicker. Eating is not enough. For a number of reasons, modern food production simply cannot provide adequate nutrition for even the laziest of people—not to mention the athlete or fitness buff. . . . That's why you need supplements." An article by a medic entitled "Sometimes You Can't Get Enough" attacks official recommended daily allowances of vitamins and proteins. Weider products, it seems, can fill the gap.

Dr. Barry Brenner, professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and a nutrition and kidney specialist, sees this sort of advice as "voodoo." Nutrition experts agree that even the average American intake of protein is twice the amount necessary for healthy growth. Many bodybuilders, even at the most amateur level, are taking from ten to 30 times that amount. Brenner argues that "if we were to look at a naturally created disease that would have an equal effect on the kidney as many bodybuilders' protein intake, it would be diabetes." He predicts a major increase in kidney failures in the next 15 to 20 years if these dietary patterns are continued. In experiments on rats performed at MIT, high protein intakes have been seen to shorten life span drastically. Brenner puts the average life span of a pro bodybuilder or football player at around 55.

But finally even proteins aren't enough. The pressure to achieve continual results often leads to illegal steroids, which can "develop" the body beyond even protein-pumped limitations. The bodybuilders I spoke to estimated that up to 20 percent of regular weight lifters are taking them, either in capsules or through needles. (The threat of AIDS being spread by shared needles in gay gyms is now a worry.) Most dealers are part of the medical profession: some are young doctors needing money for starting a practice, others simply medical students with access to the drugs. The majority of the substances are smuggled in from Mexico.

The *Underground Steroid Handbook* provides details of every possible variety. In the pages of this privately printed book, handed to me under the counter, the full paradox of the muscle cult becomes clear: the passion for building the body ends in a calculated risk of destroying it. A typical entry runs as follows: "GROWTH HORMONE (aka GH and STH) Injectable, 10 unit vials, 4 to box. Wow is this great stuff. . . . A few side effects may occur, however. It may elongate your chin, feet and hands, but this is arrested with cessation of the drug. Diabetes in teenagers is possible with it. It can also thicken your ribcage and wrists. Massive increases in weight over such a short time can, of course, give you heart problems. . . . GH is the biggest gamble an athlete can take, as the side effects are irreversible. Even with all that, we LOVE the stuff." Once the passion bites, from *GQ* to GH may not seem such a big step after all.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

The tricky road to freer trade.

GUIDE TO THE GATT

ON SEPTEMBER 15 trade ministers from 92 nations will meet at Punta del Este, Uruguay, and attempt to launch the eighth postwar "round" of negotiations to liberalize world trade. This is widely billed as a make-or-break event for the trading system, which is sinking into a morass of protectionism.

All year negotiators have been meeting in Geneva under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, attempting to define the scope of the negotiations. These preliminary talks have been a near total failure. Instead of defining a clear set of objectives, diplomats were forced to leave major sections of the communiqué blank, for the ministers to thrash out in a single hectic week.

This round, to be successful, will be fundamentally dif-

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ferent and more difficult than previous ones. Past trade negotiations were concerned mainly with reciprocal cuts in tariffs. Since the late 1940s, the average industrial tariff has been cut from over 40 percent to less than six percent. But while overt trade barriers have melted away, covert barriers have flourished. The GATT system has largely failed to invent ground rules to distinguish legitimate economic development efforts from improper forms of protection. The most cherished fundamental of the free trade system, Article I of the GATT treaty, provides that every nation shall be treated like every other nation. But whenever the United States (or France, or Japan, or whoever) negotiates a two-nation bargain (for a textile quota, or a steel quota, or an auto restraint, or a subsidized wheat sale), that deal comes at the expense of some other producer, possibly a more efficient one, and the entire fabric of free trade suffers. According to the Institute for International Economics, about $68 billion worth of U.S. imports—some 21 percent of the total—is now constrained by some form of extra-GATT protection.

The principal sponsor of the new trade round is the United States. Since about 1981, American trade officials have been urging other trading nations to take up the whole range of non-tariff issues, which are far thornier to resolve. These issues are the loopholes that undermine liberal trade—widespread subsidies, barter deals, the inconsistent standards for temporary protection of injured industries, the lack of rules for trade in services, the problem of commercial piracy and counterfeiting, the officially sanctioned protectionism in agriculture and textiles—which have been kept outside the GATT system. Clayton Yeutter, Reagan's new U.S. trade representative, argues persuasively that without progress on all of these fronts, more bilateralism is inevitable.

BUT PROGRESS in these areas presents a very difficult politics, both domestically and globally. The United States, by habit, ideology, and hegemonic self-interest, has been the main promoter of the postwar free trade system. Before 1980, when we were a net exporter of products, it was no great trick to push liberal trade outward, and at the same time to serve American commercial interests. Now, however, with a trade deficit approaching $200 billion, the immediate economic need is to balance our accounts. The immediate political need is to satisfy American producers that their economic interests are not being sacrificed to some higher diplomatic purpose.

Unfortunately, most of the U.S. diplomatic objectives that will ultimately be good for the trading system deliver little tangible benefit to American producers in the political or economic short term. Freer trade in wheat and meat, for example, will be great for Argentina, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, not for Nebraska. Liberalization of the trade regime in textiles will only accelerate the demise of U.S. textile production. As free trade advocates correctly observe, the prosperity of our trading partners is ultimately good for us, because it gives them more income with which to buy our products, and because it gives our own consumers cheaper goods and more choices. But the short-run political problem is the big trade imbalance, and politically and fiscally, the trade round must seem to solve it, not aggravate it.

Ambassador Yeutter, a former assistant secretary of agriculture, is pressing very hard to persuade the major agricultural nations to reduce their farm subsidies, now totaling close to $100 billion a year. "It's clear that on a global basis we have to have fewer resources in agriculture," he says. "It makes no sense to pour subsidies into products that nobody wants." This message, though logical economically for the long run, is hardly comforting to the voters of the farm belt, and of course it flies in the face of recent administration policy.

SINCE 1985 U.S. farmers have demanded and received vast increases in farm subsidies, including "deficiency payments," which are a backdoor form of export subsidy. The recent sale of subsidized grain to the Soviets muscled out the Canadians and Australians, who practice freer trade in farming than we, and who would probably underprice us in a genuine free market. Yeutter is pressing for a global deal to cut farm subsidies precisely because one nation can't disarm its farmers unilaterally. He is certainly correct that only a grand worldwide bargain to end the subsidy war will make it possible for each nation to stop protecting its agriculture, but many farm experts contend that agriculture is inherently subject to disastrous cycles of boom and bust and cannot function in a pure Adam Smith world. Even if Yeutter is right economically, the politics of getting to free trade in agriculture are all but insuperable.

Likewise, liberalization of "trade in services," a grab-bag concept in recent diplomatic vogue, offers limited benefits for the U.S. trade dilemma. The premier service that might be liberalized is international banking. An example of a liberalization would be greater entrée for Chase Manhattan to open branches in Turkey or Taiwan. But U.S. multinational banks seem fairly content with the present global trading system, and it is not at all clear that further globalization of finance would do much for America's trade imbalance.

Trade in services is a mushy economic concept, in large part because its genesis was political. (We're becoming a service economy, aren't we? So it must be time to liberalize trade in services.) In promoting trade in services, the administration frankly hoped to create a new domestic constituency for free trade—bankers, insurance companies, data processors, construction engineers—to make up for the growing protectionism among such erstwhile free traders as manufacturers, farmers, and trade unions. But a new free trade lobby based on services has largely failed to materialize.

Diplomatically, the ballyhoo about trade in services has backfired. It has made other nations bargain harder. You want to open banks in our country? Then open the floodgates to our textiles. More liberal access for American banks raises ancient fears about neocolonialism. Many developing nations are only just developing real capital mar-

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kets and banking systems of their own. The last thing they want is a takeover by Chase Manhattan. Brazil and India won't even discuss liberalized trade in services without U.S. concessions in the form of freer entrée to the United States for their exports.

In general, the Reagan administration's wild inconsistencies on trade policy have made it very hard to convince other nations that the United States is serious about a new trade round. Lately, under pressure from Congress, the administration negotiated a two-way deal for a 20 percent market share in Japan for U.S. semiconductor makers, new country-by-country textile restraints, and get-tough measures against Canadian cedar shingles, not to mention the Russian wheat deal. It is fine to insist that these measures were necessitated by the imperfections of the free trade system, and that the solution to protectionist sins is a grand universal baptism in the cleansing waters of Adam Smith. But try floating that at a trade conference where each nation is struggling with the short term.

ONE REASON FOR the impasse at Geneva is that different nations have fundamentally different trade agendas. For example, the European Community is running third behind Japan and the United States in the high-tech race. It recently launched a series of research and development projects, the civilian counterpart to Star Wars, to promote Euro-technology. The last thing the EC wants is a subsidies code that would brand such endeavors illegal. The Europeans, after a series of pasta wars, soybean standoffs, and the like, also are extremely wary of Yeutter's pressure to put agriculture "on a fast track" to free trade. A cornerstone of European economic union is the EC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which has allowed Europe to have an integrated farm economy by restricting entrée of many non-European farm products. Thanks to the CAP, Europe is now self-sufficient in most foodstuffs. Despite American protestations of high purpose, European diplomats tend to see Yeutter's initiative mainly as an attack on the CAP. Although they share the view that both sides must ultimately restrict farm subsidies, many Europeans would prefer to do that by stabilizing commodity prices and market shares, rather than by attempting to have complete free trade in farm products.

The Third World, for its part, is preoccupied with staying ahead of the debt collector, and is thus determined to negotiate the freest possible access to U.S. and European markets. Developing nations could not care less about services, except as a bargaining counter. The American view is that many developing nations hide far too long into maturity behind a provision of the GATT treaty that allows developing nations to protect their own economies on "infant industry" grounds. "Brazil may be a Third World nation," says a U.S. trade negotiator, "but not when it comes to steel or aluminum." Yet it is hopelessly unrealistic, if not churlish, to press debtor nations to open their internal markets at a time when the IMF demands that they go all-out to achieve big export surpluses.

Debt and trade, and the related problem of world economic growth, are intimately linked as a matter of logic and economics, but not diplomatically. In that sense, the trade round, ambitious as it seems, is cast far too narrowly. The real trade-offs that ought to occur are less a matter of I-give-you-textiles-you-give-me-bank-branches than a series of more grandiose trades. The Third World might open its markets if it could get some serious debt relief. Pressure to retaliate against Japan might lessen if Japan got serious about expanding its domestic market. All the trade dilemmas would lessen if there were a serious shared commitment to growth. But these larger issues cannot be hammered out in the context of trade talks, because different ministries and different bureaucrats are involved, and because those larger questions are not part of the ostensible agenda.

TO SALVAGE this crucial trade round, two leaps of imagination are required. First, trade must somehow be connected to the other global economic issues. Jeffrey Schott, of the Institute for International Economics, proposes that the trade round be named the Growth Round, and that would send a very useful signal.

Second, there must be some recognition of the paradox that the preservation of a liberal trade system does not always rest on purist free trade. Getting out of the trap of overproduction, falling prices, and crushing subsidy costs in agriculture may require some market sharing, or acreage controls, or price stabilization, and other affronts to Adam Smith, which worked well domestically before the farm economy was globalized. It may be better to define when subsidies of new technologies are permissible, and for how long, rather than pursue a politically futile quest to ban them outright.

Lately even the freest of the free traders have acknowledged that there is a politics to economics. Robert Z. Lawrence of the Brookings Institution, in a new monograph, *Saving Free Trade*, differentiates pure free trade from pragmatic free trade and makes a sophisticated case for adjustment policies to assist industries and workers, sounding at times almost like Robert B. Reich. And Jeffrey Schott, also a well-credentialed free trader, suggests temporary "re-tariffication" as a form of interim protection to subsidize adjustment of trade-injured industries, which is far better than the import quotas so prevalent today. (With a tariff, the extra cost to consumers goes to the government; with a quota, it goes to the foreign manufacturer.)

The system of liberal trade is well worth preserving and strengthening. But developing nations will always wish to stimulate new industries, and developed ones have a stake in minimizing the pain of dislocation to workers and communities as their own economies evolve. All of this involves a big dose of Adam Smith, but also some creative statecraft. Would that the admirers of Adam Smith now running so many industrial nations understood that paradox.

ROBERT KUTTNER

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

New Women

I went belatedly to *She's Gotta Have It*. At first I wasn't sure that I could cope with the subtleties implied in the title. Then I steeled myself; plunged; and, in good measure, was pleasantly surprised. This "seriously sexy comedy," as it's discouragingly billed, turned out to be a satirical comedy of ultramod manners. *She's Gotta Have It* was written and directed by a black man, Spike Lee, and has an all-black cast. Its subject is black liberation—the liberation of black women from the sexual chauvinism of black men—which it treats with much cinematic sprightliness and some wit.

She's Gotta Have It
(Island Pictures)

Rouge Baiser (Red Kiss)
(Circle Releasing Corporation)

This is Lee's second film: his first, unseen by me, was about the Bedford-Stuyvesant district of Brooklyn. Before this new picture is far along, we're sure of one matter: Lee has seen a lot of films and remembers them. There are overhead shots of a busy bed and fast-forward sequences of intercourse, as in Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* and De Palma's *Greetings*; there are Godard elements, such as jump cuts and actors addressing the camera, as well as the most intense study of a woman's navel since *The Married Woman*. These moments help to spin the film along with a feeling of young, energetic acquisition, and they are topped by Lee's own invention. (Both the gobbling of cinema history and the main setting, a loft studio, reminded me of Scorsese's first feature, *Who's That Knocking at My Door?*, done at the New York University film school. I learned afterward that Lee and his cinematographer, Ernest Dickerson, are also products of that school.)

The film makes some promises that it doesn't keep. We first see some still shots of Bedford-Stuyvesant, but they are misleading: the story is about middle-class blacks. The film proper begins in a large Brooklyn Heights studio that has a large bed in it, with someone writhing under the covers. The person sits up. It's a young woman, Nola, who tells us that this film is going to give her side of things. But it gives virtually everybody's side of things: the three men who are currently sleeping with her and a lesbian who wants to sleep with her. In the course of the film all the men and the lesbian tell us directly and also tell Nola how each feels about possessing her. Nola, to their surprise and discomfort, has no wish to be possessed. She has no sexual interest in the other woman; she has or has had sexual interest in the men, so she disturbs them particularly. She likes sex and she likes freedom, and she wants both.

This is hardly a novel subject by now, and Lee's script provides no new insights; but it does provide flavor. There has been much comment recently on male domination of women in black fiction, comment protesting this pattern as inaccurate or, at least, not the whole story. (Example: *The Color Purple*.) Lee's comedy takes the point further with tang and high spirits, if little depth.

Whatever the script's virtues, the picture would collapse without Tracy Camila Johns in the leading role. She is pretty and rounded, but there are plenty of pretty and rounded young women about. Johns has spirit, charm, secret delights. I'd guess that she has no great acting experience. A tribute to Lee, then, that he chose her and handled her so well.

Lee himself plays one of the three lovers—an eccentric, consciously comic biker—and gives by far the liveliest of the male performances. John Canada Terrell, as a successful model, is all external mannerism. Redmond Hicks, as the very straight straight who is supposed to be the most sympathetic of the three, has a hard time with an actor's basic task: making every word credible.

Lee's direction shows fancy footwork. For instance, when Nola tells us that she is weary of the different lines she gets from men, we see a speedy sequence of men giving her different lines. Most of the film is in black and white—many silhouette shots—and Dickerson's camera gets a lot of velvet into it. (In the middle there's a color sequence that is, in every way, an amateur blotch.) Lee clearly has gifts as writer and director; just as clearly he needs to follow his protagonist's example and move toward self-definition.

A French film also introduces a new young actress.

Rouge Baiser—the translation (*Red Kiss*) is part of the title—is set in Paris in 1937 and 1952. Vera Belmont, the writer and director, has already made a film and has produced 18 others. *Rouge Baiser* (partially subsidized by the Ministry of Culture) deals with Polish Jews who arrive in Paris in the 1930s and who are passionate communists. Stalin, prominent on the walls of homes and offices, is as much a secular savior to them as Hitler was to the Nazis. Those pictures and the constant litany of praise for Stalin and the Soviet Union give the film a grim coun-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

"About Last Night . . ." David Mamet's play *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* has been taken for a ride. But there's salty, sexy fun along the way. (Reviewed 8/4/86)

Heartburn. Mike Nichols, directing deftly, and Meryl Streep, performing brightly, give some amusement to this fairly vapid comedy about a yuppie marriage that flops. (7/28/86)

Next Summer. An ambling, amiable French comedy-drama of family life. Writer-director Nadine Trintignant does well by her husband, Jean-Louis, and their daughter, Marie. Philippe Noiret and Claudia Cardinale, as pa and ma, shine. (9/8/86)

Nothing in Common. An attempt to show a young advertising hotshot learning values from his parents' marital troubles. The attempt is muddled; still, Tom Hanks, the young man, and Jackie Gleason, his father, aided by slick dialogue, keep it moving. (9/1/86)

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terpoint: the fervor of these Jews toward leader and party corresponds—in outline, at least—to the fervor of those who wanted to exterminate them.

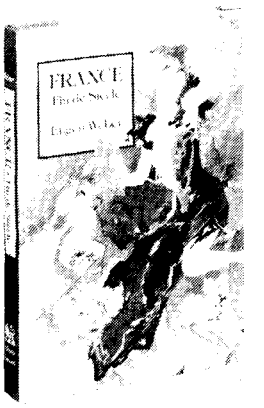
It's an interesting milieu, if only because it lets us luxuriate in enlightened hindsight. But Belmont is apparently too experienced in the film world to make a thoroughly good film. She is so canny about the profession, the industry, that she converts her milieu into the setting for a quite predictable romance. Possibly she was led to this by discovering Charlotte Valandrey, who makes her debut in *Rouge Baiser*. Valandrey is pert, sexy, appealing, and quite competent; and Belmont seems intent to establish her discovery as a sex bomb—an intent at least as strong as her concern with political drama.

In 1937 Marthe Keller says goodbye to her lover, Laurent Terzieff, as he takes a train to Moscow. The story resumes 15 years later. Keller is now married to Günter Lamprecht and has a 15-year-old daughter, Valandrey. (The time lapse and the daughter's age coincide, so we're ready for the revelation that the daughter is really Terzieff's child.) The family is devoted to the communist cause. Valandrey takes part in a demonstration and is being beaten by the police when she is rescued by a press photographer, Lambert Wilson. He mocks her party parrotings; she mocks him as a bourgeois lackey; consequently of course they have an affair, which after vicissitudes, becomes more than an affair. Terzieff returns from the Soviet Union. At a party to welcome him, he tells the assembled comrades the truth about Soviet conditions and about his own years of exile in Siberia. The comrades are unswerved. They scorn him as a turncoat. Still, later events change Valandrey's mind about the Cause.

Wilson is a nimble young actor with comic sense and romantic glow. Keller, a sterling and underrated actress, is sterling once again. Lamprecht, unforgettable as Franz Biberkopf in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, has the right presence as her husband, but why use a German actor who has to be dubbed? Terzieff's acting is uncontrolled and may be uncontrollable.

Several sequences, such as one in a tailoring shop where Valandrey works, are stagnant. Party doctrine is mostly used as a basis for boy-girl bickering. And, egregiously, the film lacks resolution. We're left unsure as to why Belmont chose these people as a subject, what she is saying about them. All that happens

FRANCE
Fin de Siècle
Eugen Weber



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politically is that a 15-year-old girl leaves the Party, primarily for romantic reasons. I'm not suggesting that the film should end with mass conversion of the communist faithful to democratic ideals; the film needs its own fulfillment, either in pathos or retrospective irony—*some* sort of comment on the still fervent faithful, who are simply left offscreen at the end. But Belmont knows these people well and, in between the bed scenes, she makes their lives vivid.

The Perils of Publishing, II

THE GOOD BOOKS BUSINESS

BY WALTER W. POWELL

BOOK PUBLISHING is one of the oldest industries in the United States and, on the surface at least, among the most stable. There are few other American businesses in which it is possible to trace a direct family lineage from the original founders to the executives of contemporary firms. And it's a rare industry in which so many of the leading companies have maintained their dominant position since the turn of the century. Moreover, a surprising number of the practices and policies associated with the book trade's cottage industry era persist in modern-day publishing.

Many of the criticisms of the industry have a long history, too. Accusations that the book trade is preoccupied with making money rather than producing books of merit have been familiar for more than a century and a half. For just as long, publishers have complained that their economic circumstances are grim, that Americans spend a pitifully small amount of money on books, that too many other attractions compete with books for the public's attention.

What really is the current state of the book trade? More specifically, how are serious non-fiction books—ones that add to our understanding of the world and influence public policies—faring? By serious, I mean both general trade books that deal in an analytic way with matters of political and social significance, and to scholarly books aimed not just at an academic audience but at a broader circle of educated readers, too. (As a social scientist, I'll modestly leave the more mysterious fate of fiction to literary critics.)

The pressing question about publishing, then, is this: At a time when the American film industry appears to have reached a creative nadir, when the costs of producing a play on Broadway are prohibitive and many theaters' lights are dim, when broadcast journalism succumbs to an obsession with the ratings race and blurs the lines between news and entertainment, has book publishing also succumbed to the dictates of the marketplace?

Any effort to chart overall trends in the book industry is risky. Publishing today is not really a single industry. It is an assemblage of different enterprises, guided by distinctive methods and aims; and few developments in the industry have the same effect on all of those sectors. Growth and commercialization have meant that some parts of the book trade have been absorbed into the high stakes world of popular entertainment. (Thomas Whiteside's *The Blockbuster Complex* provides a revealing glimpse behind the scenes of this marriage of megabuck commerce and mass culture.) But other parts of the book industry are becoming much more specialized and information-driven. Irving Louis Horowitz suggests (in his forthcoming *Communicating Ideas: The Crisis of Publishing in a Post-Industrial Society*) that nothing less than a historic transformation may be taking place: publishers, traditionally producers of knowledge, are becoming packagers of information presented in different formats and targeted for highly specific

Walter W. Powell is the author of *Getting Into Print: The Decision-Making Process in Scholarly Publishing* and co-author of *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing* (both University of Chicago Press). He is currently a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California.

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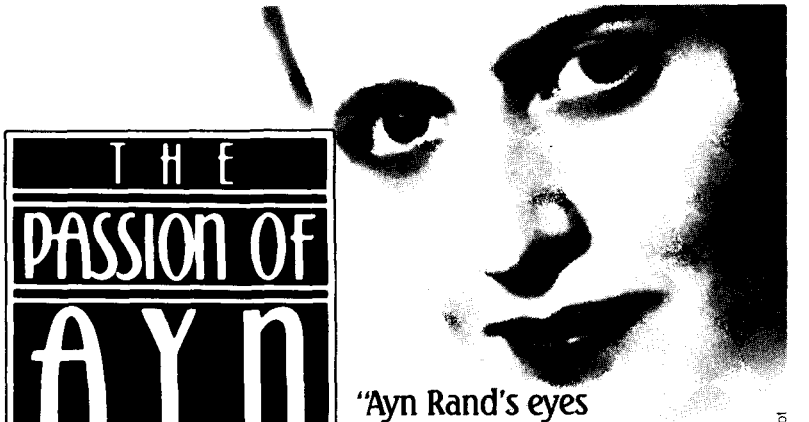
segments of the market. "The inherent value of the information and ideas," he observes, "rather than the cost of manufacturing the package, will increasingly determine pricing."

Still, the book publishing industry has not yet become an appendage of either Hollywood or Silicon Valley. A simple "massification" argument, according to which economic concentration has resulted in the homogenization and degradation of taste, provides an inadequate account of the current state of the book business. Serious books continue to be published by some large trade publishers and, more often, by smaller houses and special imprints. There are a handful of well-known trade editors, typically no more than one at a large commercial house, who continue to sponsor innovative and challenging work. Moreover, several general publishers—Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Knopf, Viking, Norton, to name a few—have commercially viable lists that garner high marks for quality as well. To be sure, books of substance and merit are not published easily at large trade houses. All too common are the "mid-list blues": books that aren't expected to attract press attention or book club or paperback offers in advance of publication are passed over by editors who in the past would have published them successfully. And yet many of them continue to appear.

INDEED, contrary to the conventional wisdom, I would suggest that an unusual combination of circumstances has probably made it easier for serious books to be published today (although not necessarily reviewed or sold) than at any time in recent years. An examination of the structural transformations that have reshaped the nature of book publishing helps explain why this is so.

As an industry, book publishing is burdened by competing demands and internal contradictions. It is both a labor-intensive craft and a business that counts on economies of scale from high-volume production. Highly dependent on the success of a large number of new "products" issued annually, some firms are nevertheless sustained by the steady earnings of their backlists. In recent years mergers have been common, but new firms have also been starting up at an unusually rapid rate. The labor force is generally overeducated but often ill-prepared for careers in contemporary publishing. Instead, subcontractors are used at almost every step along the way,



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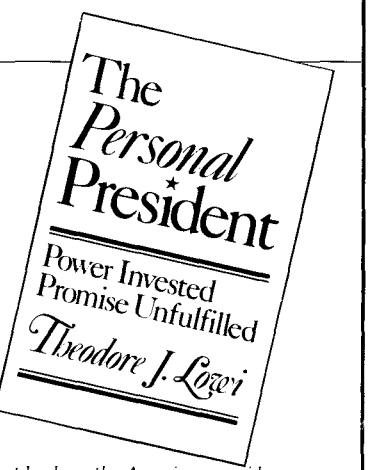

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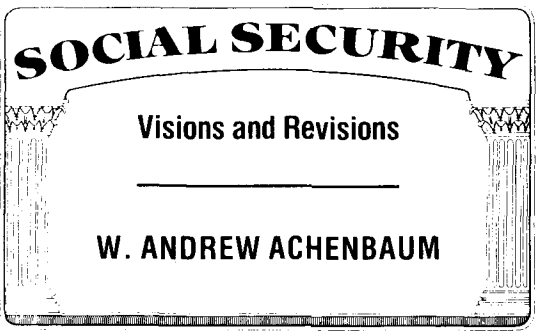

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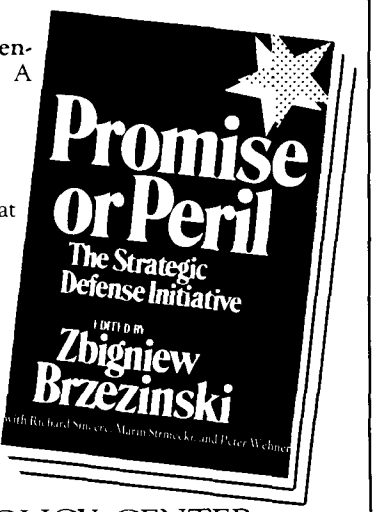

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save the initial decision to publish.

But certainly the most persistent and unresolved problem has been distribution—how to get books into the hands of interested consumers. "Gone today, here tomorrow" was Alfred Knopf's pithy summary of the publisher's plight, thanks to the returns policy that prevails: according to long-established custom, the publisher takes back all the books the retailer has bought but hasn't been able to sell. Where book publishers have responded to the problem by throwing up their hands, the large bookstore chains such as B. Dalton and Waldenbooks (which account for approximately 40 percent of all bookstore sales and a much higher percentage of the sales of general trade titles) have stepped in with a solution. The key to the chain stores' success is selling large quantities of a limited stock of titles; diversity is emphatically not their concern. Utilizing computer-monitored sales records and strict inventory control, the chains restock fast-moving titles and sweep slow-selling books swiftly from their shelves.

THE SPECTACULAR growth of these chains, and the increased concentration of ownership in book distribution and retailing, has led to fears that the retailing tail is now wagging the publishing dog, much to the detriment of books that are not destined for best-seller status. It's indisputable that changes in bookselling strategy as well as two decades of mergers, acquisitions, and corporate reshufflings have altered the balance of contradictions that characterize book publishing. Where publishing's idiosyncratic and often determinedly old-fashioned habits once dominated, now corporate management techniques exert more sway. Much more attention is paid to building media attention for a book, and to the timing of subsidiary rights (film, television, paperback, book club, international) sales. Publishers pursue products of wide appeal (such as the "celebrity bio") and spend large sums on promotion in an effort to attract audiences of commensurately large size. Both trade and textbook publishers have embraced the idea that books should be carefully packaged and promoted. Houses now have large and sophisticated marketing and publicity departments, whose advice is frequently sought, and often required, before any publishing decisions are made.

One of the unfortunate consequences of these developments has been a significant decline in the status of the editor.

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Editors in trade and textbook houses can no longer simply sign a book and then tell others to sell it. The task of negotiating a trade book contract has become quite complex, involving complicated subsidiary rights agreements. Authors have turned to agents and lawyers to help them stay abreast of, and profit from, financial changes in the book industry—and thus they have less direct contact with their editors. Those editors themselves, if they work in large trade houses, have lots of people besides authors to deal with; they spend much more time arranging deals and consulting with lawyers, corporate managers, and marketing and subsidiary rights directors.

IT IS HARD to say whether these changes represent a necessary adaptation of an outdated way of doing business or a misguided transformation brought about by outsiders. But there is considerable evidence that what has happened is not altogether bad for the health of serious publishing. While chain bookstores now exert a good deal of influence over editorial decisions, the outlets have also enabled publishers to reach new and larger audiences for popular books. And even though small publishers complain about their lack of access to the chains, when a book by a small press or a scholarly house does get "started" and receives media attention, the stores actually make it considerably easier for these publishers to receive national distribution.

Most important, though the feeling that books of merit are going unpublished may be widespread, there is little evidence for it. The works of a great number of talented novelists, foreign writers, and American scholars are finding their way into print. It may take some effort to get a hold of these books (outside of a few large cities, they may require special ordering); and it may take a good deal of money to pay for them, because their prices are usually high even when published in a quality paperback format. But they are available. In fact, from a reader's point of view, there is probably a greater variety of serious non-fiction and fiction available today than ever before.

This state of affairs is partly the result of a proliferation of small publishing houses, and of the changing nature of the lists at university presses and scholarly houses. These publishers—which include the elite university presses, the commercial scholarly houses such as Basic Books and The Free Press, small special interest houses, the special imprint lines at the large trade houses (such as Elisabeth Sifton Books at Viking), as well as a few serious trade houses—are now much more likely to publish books that only one or two decades ago would have been published by large trade publishers. To be sure, what is advantageous for readers may not augur as well for authors, particularly for those whose writing constitutes their primary source of income. Books produced by smaller houses generally get less exposure and sell fewer copies than they would had they been published by large trade houses.

It is the very success of the large, general trade firms that has created the conditions for the success of the smaller, more specialized houses. As trade publishers raised their expectations about the number of copies that a book must sell to be considered successful, they became less willing to take on eminently worthwhile books that had modest sales potential. This change in their marketing strategies created new opportunities for smaller trade houses, scholarly houses, and university presses, who moved into the territory the large trade houses vacated in their quest for blockbusters.

Cultural industries can be classified as either distributor- or producer-oriented. Publishing is unusual precisely because it nurtures both kinds of enterprises simultaneously (sometimes in a single house). While the large generalist houses aim to reach big audiences with formulaic fare, the smaller, producer-oriented houses foster close relationships between artists and audiences, which encourages innovation and excellence. Perhaps the key difference is that small specialty houses operate with the knowledge that the readers of their books are, to a large extent, the same kinds of people as those who write them—and as those who publish them. There is an implicit community of intellectual interest among publishers, writers, and readers.

The most important position in most of these firms is still that of the editor. "Houses like this one are built on strong editors," according to Arthur Rosenthal, director of Harvard University Press. Their staffs and their lists are small, and so is their combined output; total sales for these smaller houses are only a fraction of the industry's total. But their impact—whether measured in book awards, or reception in critical journals, or the role their books play in shaping academic research, as well as business and govern-

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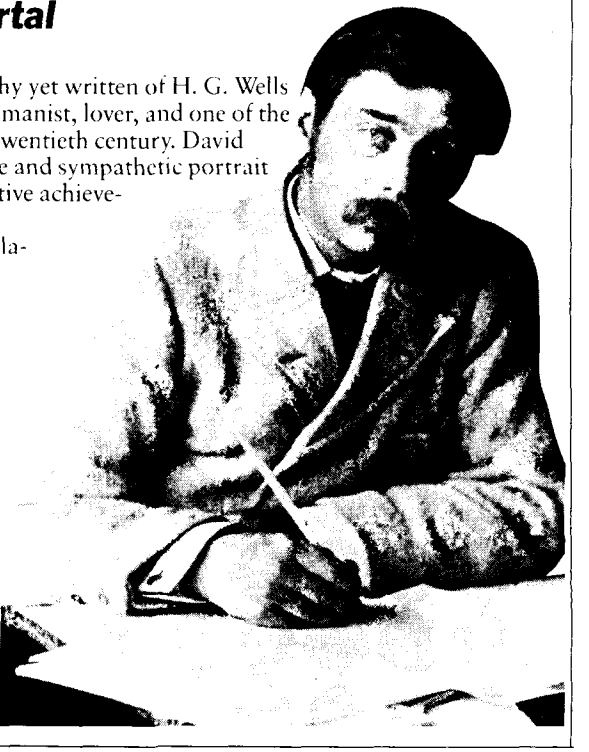

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ment policies—is considerable.

Unlike general trade publishers, who used to subsidize higher quality books of limited market appeal with the proceeds from their commercially successful books (as one editor quipped to me, "We're after hot shit or high lit"), the economic success of serious publishers depends on maintaining high publication standards. Rosenthal operates on the assumption that "you simply cannot hype something that isn't there. The credibility of our promotion is all-important." Lapses inevitably show up in the ledger, as Martin Kessler, executive director at Basic Books, emphasizes: "The cost of doing bad books is very considerable."

IN FACT, the economic strategy of specialist presses looks rather like a mirror image of the "hot shit or high lit" tactic. For scholarly publishers, the exceptional books are those intended for a general audience—books that could easily have earned their way financially onto the list of a general publisher. Harvard recently found Eudora Welty's *One Writer's Beginnings* on the best-seller list, and Carol Gilligan's *In Another Voice* has had healthy six-figure sales. The Free Press has had similar success with its history and management lists; Michael Porter's *Competitive Strategies* and Theodore Levitt's *The Marketing Imagination,* to name only two, boast the kind of sales figures that would make a general publisher envious. Basic Books has done such books as Charles Murray's *Losing Ground,* which generated heated political debate and widespread commentary. These books of broad appeal earn attention and wider distribution for their respective presses.

But these books represent only a portion of the overall lists. What these houses count on, instead, are more specialized books that sell steadily, if not remarkably, over a period of several years. No one has to guarantee that a book will make a profit before it can be signed, and if it does not leave the warehouse in explosive fashion, it will not be treated as a stepchild. The strategy is conservative; most books are signed up with the interests of a well-defined portion of the American academic community in mind, and they are priced high in order to recoup their costs through even modest sales.

Unlike scholarly presses, the small independent houses and the special imprints or small subsidiaries of the large houses cannot rely on ready-made, neat-

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ly organized audiences for their books. In fact, these houses face a number of special challenges in trying to compete with the university presses and the large general trade publishers. As a senior editor at a well-regarded independent house commented, "Our biggest disadvantage is lack of clout. Sometimes we just don't have the resources to pay what an author asks for. We're sometimes like the farm team for the big houses. We sign an author when he's relatively unknown and then when his next book comes around, the big guys pick him up."

NONETHELESS, diversity manages to survive in the book industry today. The two most visible segments—the high-powered world of mass entertainment and the less exciting but more consequential world of serious publishing—do more than coexist. They have so far supported one another in an oddly symbiotic fashion. There are, I should caution, features of this institutionally complex relationship that suggest it may not last. Many serious publishers are now comfortably buffered from the cold winds of economic reality. Some of the houses are either subsidiaries of larger publishing houses or special imprints affiliated with them. As such, they can avail themselves of their parent companies' sales forces and their office facilities and expertise. Although university presses are under great pressure to break even or become self-supporting, they too are subsidized in myriad ways—through support for individual books, through free or minimal rent, and by virtue of their location at universities with their unique access to talent and resources. These are considerable advantages for both non-profit university presses and commercial houses. So although it is possible to be somewhat sanguine about the current health of serious publishing, particularly in comparison to other cultural industries, there are no guarantees that circumstances won't change.

Yet the market works in strange, conflicting ways in the book business, which suggests that changes aren't likely to come too swiftly. Although publishers obviously do have to compete to acquire new "products," attracting new authors is not always determined on purely financial grounds. A house with a good image can successfully compete for authors even if it doesn't have a lot of money. Loyalty as well as money figures in the calculations of the staffs of serious houses, too, who rarely feel that

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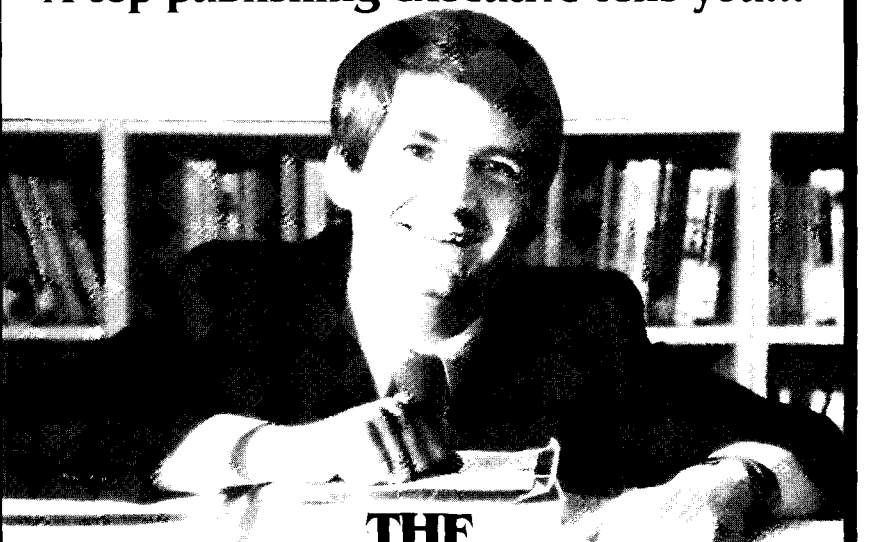

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books are just "products" like any other. Moreover, outside of the textbook and mass market paperback sectors, the barriers to entering the publishing business are low, and there are no economies of scale to be reaped for high-volume production. A fairly pluralistic industry, populated by corporate giants, assorted corporate stepchildren, subsidized university presses, small firms, and tiny "Mom and Pop" houses, is likely to be with us for some time.

The Perils of Publishing, III

NEW GLITTER STREET

BY ANN HULBERT

"WHO IN HEAVEN'S name buys all the books that come forth?" George Gissing asked in early 1892. "Day by day new publishing firms appear and the weekly issue of books is appalling." One book that had recently appeared was his own, *New Grub Street*, the first major novel to focus on the crass underside of literature. Lots of people bought it—something of a shock for Gissing. The shy man ("he had a hunted-hare look," said one observer) was suddenly popular on the fashionable London literary scene he had exposed.

Expensive Habits
by Maureen Howard
(Summit Books, 298 pp., $17.95)
Hot Properties
by Rafael Yglesias
(Dutton, 408 pp., $16.95)
Peckham's Marbles
by Peter De Vries
(Putnam's, 253 pp., $17.95)
I'll Take Manhattan
by Judith Krantz
(Crown, 437 pp., $18.95)

And soon he was resorting to a few standard tricks of the trade himself. "In the rush of authors nowadays," he explained to a friend in late 1892, "it is vastly important to keep one's name frequently before the public." Gissing turned out magazine stories, trafficked with literary agents, and joined several clubs. Most important, he started giving chatty publications the photographs and interviews they wanted.

A century later, novels about the publishing industry are suddenly enjoying a revival, and the verdict is even less flattering than it was in Gissing's day. Yet like him, the new novelists are attracting special attention for biting the hand that feeds them. Maureen Howard was featured in *Vanity Fair* on the occasion of her latest novel, *Expensive Habits*, about a writer's crisis of conscience as she looks back over her compromised career. Gossip and publicity have surrounded Rafael Yglesias's *Hot Properties*, a sordid portrait of the New York publishing world. The advance galleys of the book were hot pink, as were the matchbooks printed up for the occasion. Charlotte Curtis of the *New York Times* devoted a column to Yglesias and the ambitions of yuppie writers, and the *New York Post*'s "Page Six" named the names behind the supposed roman à clef. Peter De Vries, who looks behind the publishing scene in *Peckham's Marbles*, doesn't need much promotion to attract his loyal following. Nor does Judith Krantz, but her novel about a publishing empire has received the royal treatment anyway; *I'll Take Manhattan* (soon to be a TV miniseries) has been on the best-seller list for 16 weeks.

Like Gissing's novel, the current fiction marks a departure from the genteel oblivion that has been the publishing industry's typical fate. The reasons for its eclipse are not hard to find. Awkwardly straddling commerce and culture, publishing hasn't been able to claim the kind of big-business glamour and excitement that might attract popular writers; book companies, which deal in comparatively modest sums, have been quaintly called "houses." At the same time, the publishing world has little to offer more serious writers who are interested in the mysteries of creativity. Who wants to plumb the souls of untalented intermediaries—

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the publishers and editors who quietly labor over other people's words? It's muses, not middlemen and markets, that are the key to *Kunstleromans*. To write about publishing has smacked of narcissism or, more generously, of failed ambition—the recourse of an author who wants to write about a slice of the larger social world but doesn't dare venture past his own front yard.

PUBLISHING'S moment in the limelight comes at a time when questions of commerce preoccupy the industry. That low-minded absorption in turn inspires talk of a cultural crisis: suddenly publishing is an important symptom of Western civilization's malaise, not merely a pseudo-profession on the sidelines. Gissing witnessed a similar moment when he watched writers and publishers scrambling to exploit the emergence of a new mass reading audience. Then the revolution was one of production, which surged to match a growing demand. The current turmoil is a sign of an industry coping with oversupply. Today's conglomerates, multimedia blockbusters, and six- and seven-digit authors' advances are responses to illogical distribution methods and fickle, confusing consumer pressures. Middlebrow tastes are jumbled up with popular appetites in an audience that, especially in America, has become more affluent and educated since the war.

But the main engine of commercial motion is the same now as a century ago: publicity. In 1874 Trollope emphasized the imperative to "puff and to get one's self puffed"—an imperative that still prevails in an enterprise that has since then become more lustrous than grubby (thanks to vast entertainment and media industries). Long before TV had spawned a clamorous celebrity culture, Henry James had diagnosed the modern disease of distraction that dooms the serious author: "The faculty of attention," he wrote, "has utterly vanished from the general anglo-saxon mind, extinguished at its source by the big blatant Bayadere of Journalism." And he had described the lengths to which writers might be driven. "I must go in for an infernal cunning. It will be very amusing, I foresee that," says poor bankrupt Ralph Limbert in James's story "The Next Time." "I shall lead a dashing life and drive a roaring trade . . . I must *be* popular. It's another art—or perhaps it isn't an art at all. It's something else; one must find out *what* it is. Is it something

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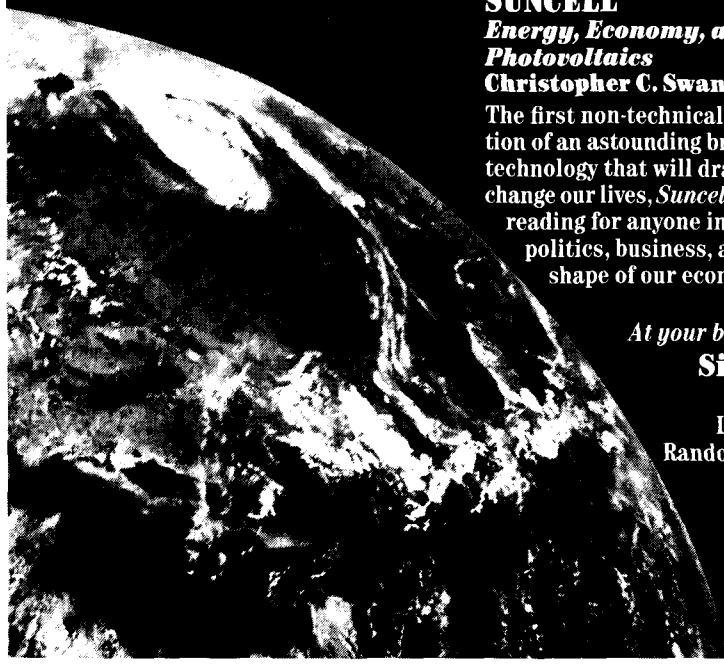

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awfully queer?—you blush!—something barely decent?"

The questions haven't changed since then, but the answers have become more elusive. The radical erosion of literary standards has left writers on shakier ground as they undertake their exposés, which fall roughly into two categories. Maureen Howard and Rafael Yglesias aim to probe beneath the superficial bustle and explore the mysterious "art" of being popular, but they have some trouble establishing their critical distance. Peter De Vries and Judith Krantz attempt lighter-hearted treatments, which share an ironic emphasis on the surface antics of the "roaring trade." Neither of them, however, seems sure of exactly how caustic to be.

In the more serious, psychological portraits, the writer—or aspiring writer—occupies the foreground, trying to negotiate a course between creativity and calculation in a hyped-up publishing world. In *Vanity Fair* Maureen Howard summed up her fifth novel this way: "The book is about wanting success so much you don't even know you're selling out—you just know what's offered." In her exploration of celebrity as "a major American disease," Howard largely gives over the narration to her protagonist, a best-selling and far from bashful novelist named Margaret Flood. At the age of 45, she suddenly faces death and decides that it's time to reckon with the falsehoods of her fiction.

AT TIMES Margaret confesses in a vigorous first-person voice, and at others she steps back to speak in the third person, ironically and dramatically, about herself and her adventures; at still others she seems to disappear behind an omniscient narrator. The result is a somewhat disorienting chronicle of her journey from corruption toward truth (and, as it turns out, toward life)—a reversal of the usual saga of the serious writer who declines into decadence, or death. Disorientation is, of course, part of the point. For all her toughness in the battle for final clarity, Margaret Flood discovers that honestly aligning her life and her writing is an elusive task.

Seeing through past falsehoods is somewhat easier. Margaret recognizes that she has subtly and selfishly altered her life to suit her fiction. Her downfall was attentively supervised by her editor, Philo Pierce, "a man who took me to be raw material like sugar cane and refined me into a small bowl of saleable white crystals to draw the ants." The key to marketability for this man (whom young Margaret, in an interview with *Vogue*, hailed as "mentor, friend, magician") was reshaping and packaging each of her creations as cultural specimens. Thus her first novel, a great success, was touted as "the unmasking of American ambition. . . . It is a woman's book, written by the new woman George Bernard Shaw . . ." She promptly fell into the hands of Hollywood and was further adulterated by Sol Negaly, "a strutting, cocksure man . . . who can co-opt talent and sincerity with so much charm you don't know it's happening until the profit tumbles in." Seduced by the charm and flattery, Margaret obediently dressed up her family's life ("I've never had the skill for their decent and ordinary story"), slandered her first husband, and then proceeded to remarry, bear a son, and lose that husband in the distorting spotlight of celebrityhood.

Now she wants to make amends to all. Margaret founders in her efforts at confession, still caught up in the notion that her story is a sweeping one: "I have searched for routes to tell this story about your father and mother," she tells her son in notebook entries written as she prepares for open-heart surgery.

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"What I have here is the material of a decade.... The great populist cycle available to all of us ..." And she also half-listens, this time more cynically, to the gushings of her new editor. Silly Fred Peach, who is transparently phony where Pierce was at least false in a grand manner, urges her on to write a nonfiction book (about a group of literary radicals in the '50s) that is born of calculation, not vision—"something shocking, that would be sexual ... in any case, a willed, a made-up book."

Howard keeps the irony, self-mockery, and self-dramatization constantly shifting, so we can never be sure when and if Margaret has her footing. The plots multiply as Howard picks up pieces from Margaret's past and present. In the end, it's only when Margaret's family life suddenly turns more melodramatic than any fictional version would dare to be—and when Fred Peach comes panting to get the tragedy on paper—that Margaret is stunned and stands almost still. But it's not clear even then what, exactly, the lesson is: "Listen, if she writes again—and we know her to be incurable, a repeated offender," the narrator (or is it Margaret herself?) tells us, "she will tell about people who bury their dead in plain sight of each other, in flat land by railroad tracks at the edge of the city." But will recidivist Margaret really write about "lives without incident—almost," and is that kind of domestic modesty actually what her creator admires? Remember how Howard, author of four previous novels about obscure lives, described *Expensive Habits* to *Vanity Fair*. As though a Philo Pierce were whispering in her ear, she announced a book about "a major American disease"—one that, as it happens, people will pay a lot to try and catch (or at least read about).

But Maureen Howard has been well inoculated against best-seller celebrityhood by more than two decades of serious writing: *Expensive Habits* may have a trendy theme and a title with a Krantzy ring, but the plot and prose lack the predictability that counts for so much in selling to large crowds. The same cannot be said of 30-year-old Rafael Yglesias's third novel, *Hot Properties*. It is supposed to do for corrupt New York publishing culture what the ideal Hollywood novel does for the tawdry heart of tinseltown. Yet with its title, Day-Glo trimmings, and page after page of soft (and not so soft) pornography, *Hot Properties* commits all the sins it attempts to skewer. The medium is apparently intended to be a large part of the message, but that device is notoriously unreliable. More than 300 pages of undistinguished prose full of vacuous characters and pant-by-number sex don't amount to a send-up of literary decadence. *Hot Properties* can't help reading like a book that is designed to make a bundle, rather than like the brave exposé of a publishing wasteland the author says he had in mind.

The novel consists of an ambitiously broad, but disappointingly stale, array of subplots, each about different aspects of publishing. There is the inside-the-newsmagazine saga, which features the standard dizzying game of bureaucratic musical chairs as editors push and are shoved. For some, Yglesias's portrait of *Newstime*, transparently modeled on *Newsweek*, may be a good gossipy read thanks to the roman à clef clues that lie close to the surface. It certainly doesn't derive any drama or depth from David Bergman, the senior writer at the maga-

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zine who is one of the novel's protagonists. A caricature of a man consumed by ambition, he is supposed to be suffering a spiritual crisis as he maneuvers his way to the top at work and tries living with luscious Patty Lane. But his dark night never transcends melodrama: in the midst of sex, "He felt a chill of horror, as if his soul was about to break out and spin into the black universe, divorced from human life."

Then there is the traditional tale of the serious writer—a young playwright named Tony Winters—who is corrupted by Hollywood. His outward decline follows the usual trite script, and his psychological response is textbook narcissism: he is in a constant rage. Yglesias also updates the favorite 19th-century story about the perils and pleasures of female hackdom. Like Gissing, who had his conniving protagonist's sisters turn to romance writing for money, David Bergman's unemployed girlfriend tries her hand at a chapter or two for Shadow Books. Patty's literary career, like so many of her predecessors', is launched and kept afloat by lascivious men (who of course aren't as circumspect as Trollope's discreetly drooling editors). The happy ending—Patty turns out to be the only serious writer of the bunch—is predictable, and unbelievable, from the moment on page one when jobless and braless Patty is the star of a literary dinner party attended by the book's brittle cast of characters.

But there is a halfway successful story here, a thin variation on Howard's portrait of malleable Margaret and her middlemen. Yglesias dramatizes the gradual assembling of a blockbuster from the prosaic mumblings of hapless exsportswriter Fred Tatter, the calculations of his literary agent, and the egocentric manipulations of his editor. Compared to David, Tony, and Patty (and the unmemorable literary entourage of editor-wives and other hangers-on), who are all flat facsimiles of realistic characters, Fred comes close at times to being a rounded comic figure. Here Yglesias has the outlines of a good satiric portrait of the other-directed man, trapped and tripped up by a contradictory combination of hyper-awareness and myopia. Poor Fred is always grabbing for the phone, only to lose another piece of himself in whatever transaction is conducted by the time he hangs up:

> The black receiver resting in its cradle, still and silent, possessing no identity but its own, reflected a small distorted image of his face peering anxiously into the black impenetrable world. "Let me in," it seemed to say, "or I'll die."

But this moment, in which Fred is succinctly captured in a contortion of consciousness, is a rarity. Far more often, Yglesias himself is trapped by his skin-deep characters into prose and scenes that fail to transcend the pulp they are meant to parody.

A BROAD indictment of distorted cultural and literary standards is clearly a tall order for fiction about publishing. Yglesias never finds the right balance between irony and psychology, leaving one wondering just where the parodic exposé is meant to start. It's simpler to focus on the commercial intrigues of the industry, and let the creative and cultural confusions emerge implicitly. This approach unapologetically subordinates psychology to satire. In fact, the satire doesn't know quite where to stop.

In *Peckham's Marbles*, Peter De Vries turns on its head the conventional tale of literary corruption. His hopelessly highbrow protagonist, Earl Peckham—whose recent novel, *The Sorry Scheme of Things Entire*, has sold a total of three copies—does not undergo the familiar rude education in the ways of the publishing world. Instead, he gets to hold forth on the subject of how not to sell too well. Peckham's protégée is Poppy McCloud, author of the blockbuster *Break Slowly, Dawn* and a fellow writer on the Dogwinkle and Dearie list. ("You must know yourself, old man," editor Dogwinkle tells Peckham, "that it's bestsellers like her who make it possible for us to publish more—subtle stuff like yours.")

Peckham's role as mentor grows out of his romance with Poppy, begun while the two of them are traversing the country. (She's signing books by the thousands, he's making a pilgrimage to the only three bookstores in the country that have ordered copies of *Sorry Scheme*.) Poppy responds willingly, and De Vries develops the conceit deftly. Peckham distills spare, sophisticated *New Yorker* stories from Poppy's purple prose and engineers her emergence as one star in a new and fashionable literary school. He gives the school a name: "He had decided against 'The Dirty Romantics' . . . in favor of 'The Vagabonds,' which would emphasize the fact that their characters were all sexual itinerants wandering from one ephemeral relationship to another," and

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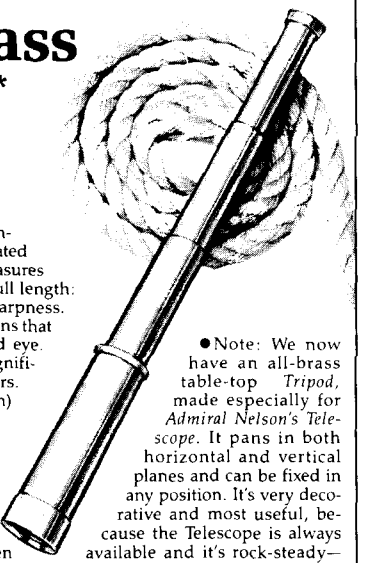

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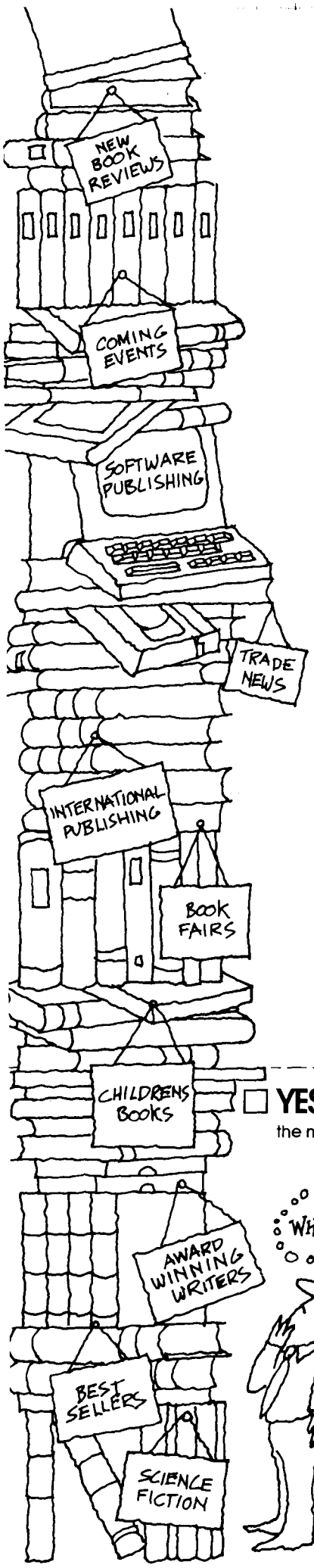

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he successfully primes the media.

But in the denouement De Vries lets his comedy of standards get muddled. Poppy dumps Peckham, offended when she discovers that he once called her book "trash" (even though she's never pretended to write anything but potboilers), and she disappears from the story. Peckham is adrift, in a literary as well as a romantic way. He lapses into the stock impossibly-out-of-it-novelist role he played at the outset, even though he's just shown a wittier, savvy side to his character. Thus De Vries abandons his most subversive and interesting theme: in the reprocessing of Poppy for more sophisticated tastes, he has shown that high culture is hardly exempt from calculating compromises. (At the same time he has implied that lowbrow authors can at least claim a certain pragmatic honesty.) The erosion of standards, he suggests, isn't a simple matter of decline. The disorientation is more radical than that, as editors, publishers, advertisers, and writers look anxiously upward as well as greedily downward in search of values, however vacuous, to steer by.

It's unsophisticated Judith Krantz who manages to deflate all the pretentious confusion almost without trying. The heroine of *I'll Take Manhattan* is jade-eyed Maxi Amberville, who thwarts the plot of Cutter Dale Amberville to destroy the family's magazine publishing empire—reduce it to "just another item on the balance sheet of a giant conglomerate." Maxi's strategy is to take over *Buttons and Bows*, a failing fashion weekly in the Amberville holdings, and transform it into the glitzy *B&B*. ("What kind of a name is that," her daughter asks. "Do I know? Does it matter?" Maxi burbles. "Bread and Butter, Bosoms and Bottoms, Benedictine and Brandy, Balls and Bums, whatever suits your fancy. It's called *B&B* and that means F-U-N!") Lurking among Krantz's countless scenes of scheming, shopping, and sex is an ironic gimmick with some real potential: the new "concept" behind *B&B* is to make women feel good about themselves just the way they are. That heretical notion conflicts, as Maxi knows but blithely disregards, with the key ethic of consumer culture: a little status anxiety helps clinch a sale.

Krantz has inadvertently raised some of the questions about motivation and taste that have long confused the enterprise of publishing and the participants in it, never more so than now. The stark choice between selling out or producing serious (and unlucrative) writing doesn't quite describe the situation these days. To be sure, scholarly publishers are still busy, and the blockbuster business thrives on ever more media tie-ins and elaborate public relations schemes. But the real growth has been in an uneasy middle range of readers and writers who want facsimiles of high, sophisticated culture rather than mere froth. For this amorphous audience, which has flourished nowhere more than in affluent American postwar culture, the old appeals to either appetites or elevated thoughts are too simple and unsubtle. The new equivocating trick is to exploit anxious pretensions.

Gissing saw it coming. "I shan't be able to address the bulkiest multitude; my talent doesn't lend itself to that form. I shall write for the upper middle-class of intellect, the people who like to feel that what they are reading has some special cleverness, but who can't distinguish between stones and paste," explains Jasper Milvain, the confident hack of *New Grub Street*. "That last thing of mine in *The West End* distinctly hit the mark; it wasn't too flashy, it wasn't too solid. I heard fellows speak of it in the train." Substitute "on TV" for "in the train," and the quotation could almost stand today—except that Jasper is entirely clearheaded about the literary standards he flouts. The writers, editors, publishers, and agents who maneuver in the current novels are equally clever. They can point out the paste and they can produce it, too. But on new glitter street they are more confused than Jasper ever was. They can't tell what might qualify as a real stone.

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The Perils of Publishing, IV

THE FORGOTTEN MIDDLEMEN

BY ROBERT DARNTON

HAVING SURFEITED themselves with theory, literary scholars are now turning to history. "The new historicism" and "the new literary history" announced in a recent spate of books and articles represents an attempt to halt the work of deconstruction and to ground the study of literature in a reappraisal of the past. But which past? The old literary history sliced time into segments marked off by the appearance of great writers and great books—*l'homme et l'oeuvre*, according to the classic French formula. Today's historian needs to work with a broader conception of literature, one that will take account of men and women in every walk of life who had a way with words.

Robert Darnton is professor of history at Princeton University and the author most recently of *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (Basic Books).

The folkways of the word include mothers who sing nursery rhymes, children who chant jump-rope verse, teenagers who tell dirty jokes, and blacks who trade ritual insults ("playing the dozens"). Historians might prefer to leave such people to the anthropologists. But even if they restrict literature to communication through the printed word, their conception of it could be expanded to include some unfamiliar figures—ragpickers, papermakers, typesetters, wagon drivers, booksellers, and even readers. Bookish literature belongs to a system for producing and distributing books. Yet most of the people who made that system work have disappeared from literary history. The great men have squeezed out the middlemen. If seen from the perspective of the transmitters of the work, literary history could appear in a new light.

I would like to present this point of view by discussing some of the charac-

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ters I have encountered in the papers of the Société typographique de Neuchâtel (STN), a major publisher and wholesaler of French books during the last two decades of the Old Regime. Neuchâtel, a tiny Swiss principality on the eastern border of France, was an ideal site for producing the kind of books that could not pass censorship in France—that is, anything that might offend the Catholic Church, the state, or conventional morality. Some of the STN's books—*The Private Life of Louis XV*, for example, or *The Black Gazette by a Man Who Isn't White*—managed to offend all three and became best sellers, although they, too, have dropped out of literary history. Others were classics of the Enlightenment or inoffensive works, such as travel books and sentimental novels, which the STN pirated. To the Swiss publishers and their clients in the French book trade, literature was a business. As one customer put it, "The best book for a bookseller is a book that sells."

HOW DID the business look to the people involved in it? Consider the publisher and his attempts to extract copy from authors. The two main partners of the STN, Frédéric-Samuel Ostervald and Abraham Bosset de Luze, took business trips to Paris at the height of the Enlightenment. One can follow them from their reports to the home office as they crossed France by coach, found a suitable hotel, had their wigs freshened, hired a lackey, and made the rounds of the literary world.

French by culture but provincial and Protestant in temperament, they felt a little overwhelmed at first by "this immense and noisy city." They needed a guide to find their way around. When they called on booksellers, they discovered that the Parisians did business only until two in the afternoon—and were never at home if a bill was to be collected. But the evenings compensated for the frustrations of the day. "To tell you the truth," Ostervald wrote home after one dinner party, "I drank some graves, some champagne, some hermitage, some malaga; and seated as I was between two amiable ladies, my ideas got a little scrambled."

The publishers picked up literary gossip. D'Alembert told them that he had asked Frederick the Great to hold a service for the repose of the soul of Voltaire soon after Voltaire's death. "I consent," Frederick had replied, "although I don't much believe in eternity."

But mainly they talked business. They calculated how they could undercut the Parisian publishers by shaving costs and profits and then set out to steal the best authors. Soon they were deluged with proposals from obscure hacks. "An author poor as Job came by again yesterday, offering to sell me a manuscript about the Jesuits," Bosset wrote. But he and Ostervald preferred to publish the biggest names. Having dealt with Voltaire and Rousseau in Switzerland, they knew how to beard a philosophe. They entered into pourparlers with d'Alembert, Raynal, Beaumarchais, Mably, Marmontel, and Morellet. They even approached Benjamin Franklin with a scheme to peddle French books in the New World.

ALL THIS parleying did not result in many contracts, but it illustrates the character of publishing as an activity. The publishers were always in negotiation. A dozen plots were always brewing, and the ones that succeeded were the exception—the transactions that brought into being a small amount of literature from the nebulous vastness of the literature-that-might-have-been.

One work that congealed out of the shoptalk in Paris was *Du Gouvernement et des loix de la Pologne* (*On the Government and Laws of Poland*, 1781) by Gabriel Bonnot de Mably. Like many authors, Mably knew his book would be a best seller; and he asked for only 100 free copies in exchange for his manuscript. But it flopped. The STN was to blame, Mably complained in a post-mortem discussion conducted through the mail. Instead of capitalizing on the public's interest in the partition of Poland (1772), the Swiss had become bogged down in their production schedule.

Ostervald defended the STN with a brief account of its market research:

> Having printed up a great number of title pages and sample tables of contents, which we sent to several good booksellers in Paris, Versailles, Lyon, and Rouen, I did not find a single one who would place an advance order. They all said that although they were persuaded of the merit of the work, the public was no longer interested in its subject. I had to fall back on Germany and northern Europe; and as soon as I was sure of a hundred orders, I started the presses rolling . . . Voilà, Monsieur, a disagreeable subject of contention.

Authors were a difficult species. Ostervald found them "vain. They are puffed up with real or supposed knowl-

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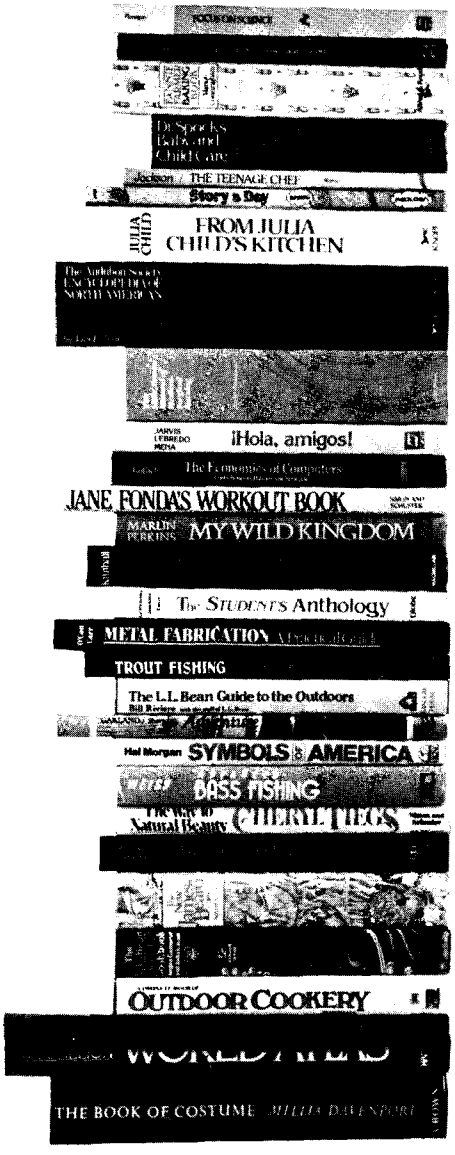

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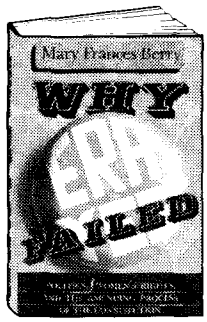

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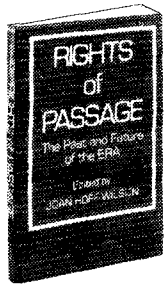

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edge." However witty they might be at the dinner table, they seemed to be governed by greed when it came to signing contracts. Even d'Alembert, a charming conversationalist, struck Osterwald as someone who "is greatly concerned with the lucrative side of his writing."

Not that the publishers suffered from an underdeveloped profit motive. They made a business of Enlightenment. "We must stress once again," Osterwald and Bosset wrote from Paris, "that it is not difficult to find good, admirable, marvelous things to print; the crucial thing, the supreme object to which we must apply ourselves, is to be sure before printing that we can turn the copy into cash." When profits dropped, the Swiss shut down presses, fired workers, and lived off their stock. They had no illusions about the nobility of literature as a calling. "This job produces more bile than any other," they concluded. After years of bargaining with authors and battling with competitors, Osterwald summarized his views of his profession as follows: "You should not promise more butter than bread, nor believe anything that you can't see with your own eyes, nor count on anything that you can't hold in your hand with all four fingers and the thumb."

THOSE REMARKS suggest the perspective from one position on the circuit of communications. There were many others. The dossier of Jean-Nicolas Morel, a paper miller from the tiny village of Meslières in the Jura Mountains of the Franche-Comté, shows how the book business appeared to someone who supplied its raw material. Morel filled his letters with palaver, scribbling away with superb indifference to spelling and grammar. He was especially eloquent on two subjects: the excellence of his paper and his own virtue. He assured the STN that he bought nothing but the best rags for his stuff (the watery pulp from which paper was made). He patronized ragpickers who knew how to get the cream of the crop by wooing servant girls with sweet talk and gifts of pins and needles. Morel's water was the purest in the whole mountain range. He was the king of the trade in the Franche-Comté. And unlike his competitors, he never cheated by mixing inferior rags in his vat or by slipping defective sheets into underweight reams. No, he assured the Neuchâtelois, whom he took to be pious Calvinists, he ran his business according to the precepts of St. Paul and the Sermon on the Mount.

Still, if they wanted to knock a few sous off the price, he could add some quicklime to his stuff. That would make the sheets look as white as superior grade paper, but it did have an unfortunate side effect: after a while the ink would turn yellow on the pages. For this reason, the French government had forbidden the use of quicklime in papermaking and penalized offenders with a fine of 300 livres. Morel did not expect to get caught, however, because he hadn't put his name and watermark on the molds that he had had woven—which was also a violation of the law.

The Swiss did not give in to this temptation, but they let Morel get away with supplying reams that were slightly underweight (quality in paper was determined mainly by weight and whiteness)—and then they retaliated by paying him with bills of exchange drawn on relatively weak companies with unusually long dates of maturity.

Morel countered with an appeal to the sentimental side of the publishers. His son had been laid low by a strange disease. The doctors insisted that there was only one cure: Neuchâtel wine. Morel had tried all kinds of medicaments and all kinds of drink: "burgundies, malaga, côte roti, hermitage, muscadet, tinto, Alsatian ... even the good wines of the Comté." Nothing but the very best Neuchâtel, white or red, would do the job. Morel would accept two barrels in place of the bills of exchange and would collect them when he delivered the next batch of paper.

AND SO IT went in letter after letter, each side bargaining for every advantage it could extract from the other. Haggling like this, vast amounts of it, conducted with passion and humor, went into every book in the era of the common press. But it has remained hidden from our view, because we have not had access to publishers' archives. Bartering over paper was especially important, because paper represented from 50 to 75 percent of the production costs of early modern books. And early modern readers had an eye for paper. They usually bought books unbound and inspected the sheets carefully, rubbing them between their fingers, holding them up to the light, testing for texture, color, and blemishes.

The readers also paid close attention to the printing. After producing volume 15 of the quarto edition of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, the STN received complaints

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from customers who had received copies disfigured by fingerprints from the pressmen. While examining a copy in the municipal library of Neuchâtel, I found a vivid thumbprint on page 635. The foreman's wage book showed that that page (sheet 4L) had been printed by a certain "Bonnemain." He also turned up in the STN's correspondence with the recruiting agents who supplied it with workers who tramped from shop to shop on the typographical tour de France. So I could learn a little bit about his life.

BONNEMAIN—like many printers he traveled under a nickname—was dark-haired and Norman. He had learned the tricks of the trade in the printing shops of Paris and then took to tramping. In Lyon he fell in with the Kindelem family—a father, mother, and son—who also lived on the road between irregular stints of employment. Together they hiked northward through Bresse and the Franche-Comté to the town of Dôle, where they found work with a master printer named Tonnet. The younger Kindelem seduced the salesgirl of the shop, while the others became embroiled in quarrels with Tonnet. One day after collecting their week's wages, they dumped some half-printed sheets on the shop floor and ran for Switzerland, taking the girl with them.

They turned up in Neuchâtel a few days later. All of them worked on the *Encyclopédie*, but the Kindelems got in trouble with the STN foreman and took to the road again. Bonnemain remained in the shop for 20 months, one of the longest stints put in by any of the STN pressmen. He did not overexert himself, however. The STN discovered that he spread an excessive amount of ink on the type so that he would not have to pull hard on the bar of the press in order to get an impression: hence the origin of the thumbprint.

By tracing the fingerprint to its origins, one can see into the lives behind the greatest book of the Enlightenment. The *Encyclopédie* was an intensely human work, produced by craftsmen like Bonnemain as well as by philosophers like Diderot. It deserves to be studied not merely as a text but also as a physical object, warts and all.

One can also study the campaign to sell the book. The STN promoted the *Encyclopédie* through advertisements and prospectuses; but it relied primarily on its commercial correspondence, because retailers paid special attention to information that arrived through the grapevine of their trade. They also listened to the pitches of sales representatives. So in 1778 the STN sent one of its employees, Jean-François Favarger, on a sales trip.

He traveled by horse, flogging encyclopedias for nine months through nearly all the major towns of southern and central France. The horse could not stand up to the punishment. After a long march down the Rhône Valley and across parts of the Cévennes Mountains, its legs began to swell and it took to collapsing under Favarger several times a day. He finally sold it in Loudun and purchased a sturdier beast, which appears in his expense account along with his treatments for saddle sores and occasional splurges at cabarets.

When Favarger arrived home, covered with mud and tired to the bone, he had picked up a more detailed knowledge of the book trade than any historian can ever acquire. What an education it would have been to ride at his side! But we have his diary, which contains a running commentary on the foibles of booksellers and the state of the literary market along hundreds of miles of the trade route.

MY FAVORITE entry concerns a bookseller in Arles named Gaudion, the only one on the entire circuit who took an ideological approach to his business: "Arles. Gaudion is pure gold, but he is a curious character. . . . When I talked to him about the Bible and the *Encyclopédie*, he said he was too good a Catholic to try to spread two such impious works."

Once the books were printed and sold, they had to be transported to the STN's customers, mostly retail dealers scattered throughout France. As a large portion of the merchandise was illegal, it had to be smuggled. Smuggling was a major industry in the narrow valleys between Switzerland and France, where it went under the name of "insurance."

Entrepreneurs called "insurers" contracted with the STN to get the books across the French border. They hired teams of "porters," gave them a stiff drink at an inn on the Swiss side of the border, and sent them off through mountain paths with backpacks of books, which they delivered to secret entrepôts on the French side. A French agent then transferred the books to crates and sent them as domestic merchandise under false bills of lading to bookshops everywhere in the kingdom. Flying squadrons of the customs service patrolled the border. If they caught a

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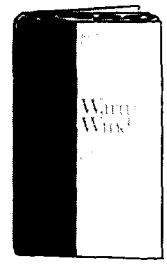

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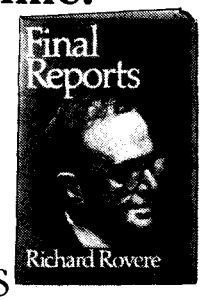

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porter, they confiscated the books, and the insurer had to pay compensation to the STN. The porter might be branded with the letters GAL for *galérien* and sent off in irons to row in the galleys, either for a few years or for the rest of his life if he had repeated his offense.

Insurance was therefore a tough business, and the businessmen who ran it drove hard bargains, calculating profit margins and risks with precision. Guillon l'aîné, an insurer from Clairvaux, charged 16 percent of the value of the merchandise for a border crossing. His men backpacked the books in loads of 80 pounds, 70 when the snow was deep. In March 1773 two of them, including their "chief," got caught. Guillon feared he could never pry them out of prison, because the bishop of Saint-Claude took a special interest in the case and the books included Mercier's utopian novel, *The Year 2440*, which did not make the Church look good. Guillon paid up, at a cost of 240 livres (roughly a half year's wages for one of the STN's workers), and lectured the STN on his good faith as a businessman: "I profess to be honest and upright. . . . I would be distraught if I caused you to lose as little as a farthing." He then raised his fee to 20 percent of value. What became of the porters cannot be determined.

The difficulties did not end once the books arrived in the retail stores, because the booksellers had to sell them and pay their bills to the STN, which in turn used the money to compensate the printers, papermakers, and authors of the next works on the production line. The bookseller might be considered the most important middleman of the entire system, for he operated in the crucial area where supply met demand.

Booksellers came in many varieties. Some were pillars of society, some lived by their wits on the far side of the law. I have a weak spot for the latter, whose ways of doing business can be appreciated from the case of Nicolas Gerlache.

Gerlache began life as a tanner. Tanning led to binding, binding to book peddling, peddling to smuggling, and smuggling to prison. In his police report, Gerlache appears as the leader of a smuggling ring that operated on the northeastern border of France: "He inhabits the sewer of Parnassus, lives off its muck, and animates the swarm of insects that cover the border area and threaten to spread throughout the kingdom." (The police of the Old Regime favored a more literary mode of expression than that of their successors in the 20th century.)

After his release in 1767, Gerlache promised to go straight. He took up tanning again in Metz, and reports of police spies indicated that he kept away from "bad books," as the police called them. (They were "philosophical books" to the professionals in the trade.) By 1770 things were looking up. Gerlache had wooed and won a young woman who provided him with a dowry of 2,400 livres—a good sum for a bride in the upper ranks of the lower classes—and a sympathetic mother-in-law.

The young couple decided to establish a small bookshop and bindery. The bride's mother advanced 800 livres for skins, and the dowry went for furniture, rent, and binding equipment. The stock came from J. L. Boubers, a publisher and wholesaler in Brussels who specialized in "philosophical books" and was then cooperating with the STN in an edition of d'Holbach's notorious *System of Nature*.

At this point Gerlache surfaced in the correspondence in Neuchâtel. He appears in his letters as a serious, hardworking young man intent on starting a business and on making something of his life:

> I am from a family that has fallen on hard times and now has nothing. I was obliged to learn the craft of tanning; but being full of zeal for commerce, I gladly quit my profession to take up the offer M. Boubers made to me. . . . And now I have put into my business the hundred louis I received in marrying the person whom I am happy to possess and who seems to have been born for work and commerce.

One should allow for the fact that Gerlache was trying to impress a supplier and win some credit. But the STN made inquiries of local businessmen, and they described him as "a young man who works hard and is very correct in his conduct." Gerlache purchased a *lettre de maîtrise* for 803 livres, which gave him the right to participate in the book trade under the supervision of the guild in nearby Nancy. He established supply lines with the STN and the Société typographique de Sarrebruck as well as with Boubers in Brussels. He bought a horse and cart and peddled books around the countryside while his wife minded the shop in Metz. And he founded a reading club (*cabinet littéraire*) where the townspeople, especially the soldiers from the local garrison, could read anything in his shop for three livres a month—little more than a day's wages for a skilled carpenter.

Gerlache carried a general assortment of books, but he seemed to specialize in the "bad" or "philosophical" variety that had got him into trouble with the police five years earlier. His letters indicate that his customers hungered for the most forbidden kind of fruit: atheism (*System of Nature*, *The Three Impostors*), pornography (*Theresa the Philosophe*), and political scandal (*The Gazeteer in Armor*).

Gerlache's correspondence makes it possible to follow the fate of the little business month by month. The first year was especially hard, because it took time to build up a clientele. But the reading club brought in a promising flow of customers in the second year, even though Gerlache had to be away from home on long and arduous peddling expeditions. He also did some smuggling for Boubers, who, it turned out, preferred to use him for running books rather than for retailing them. Relations with Brussels soured and the supply from the northwest dried up. But Gerlache tightened his alliance with the Société typographique de Sarre-

SOMEWHERE

Travelling alone through Europe,
one can make beautiful moments—
the pale bowl of fruit, the herringbone parquet,
the bare feet up on a marquetry table
in a slant of sun interlaced with sparrow
twitter and a trolley's distant squeal
(always, this silence of travelling alone
like a broad tinted mat that surrounds
some precise old engraving, the absence
of another voice a chance, once more,
to face one's life and to live solemnly,
with an eloquence, like a bow being drawn
across a cello the color of God's cigar—
to make, of this scuttle and heartbeat, art).

JOHN UPDIKE

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bruck. By June 1772 his reading club had grown to 150 members, and he estimated that the shop was bringing in 2,400 livres a year, enough to feed a family.

The Gerlaches prepared to fit a baby into the rooms above their shop. But as Mme Gerlache neared the end of her pregnancy, her mother fell dangerously ill. "I am in a critical moment," Gerlache wrote to the STN. "My mother-in-law is about to die and my wife to give birth, and I'm afraid that the death of her mother will cause her grave harm." The wife and the baby pulled through, but the mother-in-law died. She left 6,000 livres, and Gerlache began to order in larger quantities, paying by bills of exchange with 12 to 18 months maturation.

Soon he had overextended himself. When a garrison of soldiers, who included some of his best customers, was transferred in 1773, he saw that he would not be able to pay off some of the notes. He begged for a reprieve, protesting that "I would rather die than let any note of mine go unpaid."

But a few months later his back was to the wall and he was fighting for his life. The tone of the letters changed. If any creditor tried to crush him, he warned, "I will set fire to everything I have in order to keep the law from seizing it." He begged the STN to ship him more audacious works "in the genre of the *Social System*" (a radical tract by the baron d'Holbach) so that he could capitalize on the demand for forbidden books. But when the STN saw him taking greater risks, it refused to extend any more credit. In October 1774 his supplier in Saarbrücken went bankrupt—a disaster, Gerlache reported, that "plunges me into a desperate situation." He arranged a legal separation from his wife so that her property could not be claimed by the creditors. And in November he disappeared, leaving wife and baby behind.

NO BOOKSELLER can be taken to typify the trade, but I have found a great many careers that ended as Gerlache's did: Pascot of Bordeaux, "decamped"; Brotes of Anduze, "fugitive"; Gailliard of Marseille, "doesn't exist here any more, ran off to America"; Planquais of Saint-Maixant, "it's said that he enrolled in the army"; the widow Reguilliat of Lyon, bankrupt and in hiding in order to "keep my person in a safe place so I will avoid the horrors of prison"; Boisserand's clerk in Roanne, disappeared with the cash box, "in such a way that it's impossible for me to have him arrested"; then Boisserand himself: "left town, since he couldn't cope with his debts. . . . His poor wife asks me to solicit your pity . . . because he worked hard and lived miserably all his life and left several children unable to fend for themselves"; Jarfaut of Melun:

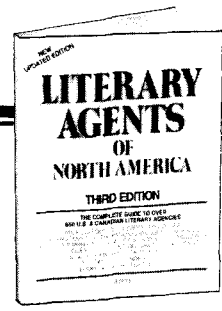
> Three years ago this bookseller disappeared, signed up for the colonies, they say. His wife and children, who are living off charity here, haven't received any news at all from him. Perhaps he is dead. . . . The only thing certain is that Jarfaut's wife and her five children are living in the most horrible penury.

Of course many booksellers remained "solid," to use one of their favorite terms. But I am amazed at how many went under. Before limited liability and the industrial revolution, capitalism suffered from a heavy casualty rate among the entrepreneurs. Large businessmen and small tradesmen often gambled with everything they had; and when they lost, they lost everything. The last letter in many of the dossiers in Neuchâtel comes from an abandoned wife or a family friend, and it ends with a phrase that, in the 18th century, meant the abandonment of hope: "He left his keys under the door."

DO THESE brief glimpses into the lives of literary middlemen change our picture of literature? I cannot claim that the works of Voltaire and Rousseau take on a new meaning if one knows who sold them. But by getting to know Gerlache, Bonnemain, and Morel, one can get the feel of books as artifacts from the 18th century. It is crucial, of course, to study the original editions. By seizing them in all their physicality, one can grasp something of the experience of literature two centuries ago.

That may sound like mysticism, but it also may diffuse some of the mystification that set in with the great-man, great-book view of literary history. The great books belong to a canon of classics selected retrospectively over the years by the professionals who took charge of literature—that is, by the critics and college professors whose successors are now deconstructing it. This kind of literature may never have existed outside the imagination of the professionals and their students.

To 18th-century Frenchmen, literature—or the Republic of Letters, as they would have put it—certainly included Voltaire and Rousseau. But it also included Pidansat de Mairobert, Moufle



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d'Angerville, and a multitude of other writers who have disappeared from literary history. Their works sat on 18th-century shelves alongside *Candide* and *The Social Contract*. A best-seller list from the Old Regime would have to include *The Year 2440*, *Theresa the Philosophe*, and a great many other "bad books." How bad were they? They make very good reading today. More important, they open up the possibility of rereading literary history. And if studied in connection with the system for producing and diffusing the printed word, they could force us to rethink our notion of literature itself.

DOLLARS AND DEMOCRACY

The Capitalist Revolution: Fifty Propositions about Prosperity, Equality, and Liberty by Peter L. Berger

(Basic Books, 262 pp., $17.95)

Peter Berger comes on like a sociological Sergeant Friday: cautious, open-minded, truth-seeking. "All I want is the facts, ma'am." There is a difference, though. Sergeant Friday was looking for the answers to small, well-defined questions. If B and C saw A drinking coffee at the X Restaurant at time T, then A could not possibly have been in the lobby of the Y Building at time T plus ten minutes, which is where and when the bank was held up.

Berger claims that he is doing essentially the same thing: proposing empirical hypotheses, checking them against the known facts, quite prepared to see them either confirmed or contradicted by new facts, just your basic scientist doing a job. The job is to isolate the social, political, and cultural implications of capitalist economic organization. His questions and his answers, however, are incomparably more grandiose than Friday's. Here are a few examples. "An economy oriented toward production for market exchange provides the optimal conditions for long-lasting and ever-expanding productive capacity based on modern technology." "Ongoing industrialization, regardless of its socioeconomic organization (be it capitalist or socialist) is the basic determinant of social mobility." "The values of individual autonomy are undermining East Asian communalism and are likely to continue doing so."

Some of Berger's "propositions" about capitalism (there are 50, count them, 50) are rather more concrete, and I will come back to them. But these, and many like them, even when plausible, are so vague and general that one can hardly imagine them being proved either true or false. How could we ever identify the "optimal" conditions for something as complicated as productive capacity based on modern technology? Social mobility has so many dimensions and so many causes. How could we hope to single out industrialization—itself multidimensional—as its "basic" determinant? Even if East Asian communalism decays, how will we know that it is because it is being undermined by other values, and not for different socioeconomic reasons?

Fifty such propositions in 200 pages: the arguments for them turn out to be mainly casually subjective judgments based on casually selected evidence. Friday could never convince a jury that way. One is driven to conclude that Berger's intention is not really scientific or analytical but ideological or polemical. He is not Joe Friday but Eliot Ness. We are not watching "Dragnet." We are tuned in to "The Untouchables."

Well then, who are the Bad Guys? Strangely enough, Berger's attack is directed primarily against Eastern European socialism and Western socialist intellectuals. I call this strange because it has been decades since I have heard anyone describe the economies and societies of Eastern Europe as something worth emulating. There are still European intellectuals (though hardly any Americans) who describe themselves as socialists, but if you look closely almost none of them advocates serious socialism. They are social democrats perhaps; they are for more rather than less activist economic policy, for more rather than less redistribution of income, for more rather than less provision of public services, but almost never for large-scale government ownership and operation of industry.

By the way, I think this has happened for just the reasons Berger gives. He is right to insist that advanced industrial capitalism has been successful in developing and using the vast productive power of modern technology. He is right that large masses of the population have shared in high material standards of life, more so than early critics of the system had believed likely, though there is clearly room for improvement. It is a fact that the existing socialist economies have turned out to be much less efficient, and not a whole lot more egalitarian either. Maybe the next one will do better, but the odds seem to be against it, and this is probably "no accident."

Berger goes on to argue that there is an intrinsic link between capitalism and political democracy and between socialism and authoritarian politics. This inference is no doubt less secure, but the historical evidence surely favors it. Locke, Harrington, and, for that matter, Madison believed that ownership of property gave a citizen some necessary independence and protected him from being corrupted by government. They may have overlooked the danger that a large concentration of ownership might lead in the opposite direction, to the corruption of government by the rich. Be that as it may, when the locus of economic power and the locus of political power literally and formally coincide, the temptation to abuse them both must be irresistible. It has certainly not been resisted, whenever the opportunity has arisen.

SO FAR so good. But then Berger evinces a suspicious tendency to push his argument too far. He agrees that capitalism does not inevitably bring democracy, but he feels obliged somehow to define "democracy" to include South Africa, and to detect worthwhile democratizing tendencies in South Korea. He decides, on the flimsiest of evidence, that the vast income inequalities in advanced capitalist economies are to be attributed not to capitalism but to the imperatives of modern industry, however organized. But then, when he observes that Japan and the smaller East Asian economies manage to operate along successful industrial capitalist lines with much less inequality, he attributes that to Confucianism, or Buddhism, or some East Asian exceptionalism, or something.

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When he observes that intellectuals tend to have an unwholesome attraction to social-democratic ideas, he decides that this must be simply because the demand for their talents is linked to the expansion of public services, and also because they have abandoned the consolations of religion. He is given to empty but tendentious propositions like this one:

> The leveling . . . (of income distribution under capitalism) . . . can be strengthened and accelerated by political interventions (notably redistributionist policies), but if these interventions exceed a certain degree (which at this time cannot be precisely specified), there will be negative consequences for economic growth and eventually for the standard of living.

That way lies the Laffer curve.

WHAT IS going on here? I am on pretty shaky ground myself now, but I have a notion. Early on, Berger points out that the world has never seen, nor is it likely to see, a "pure" capitalism with no political intervention in economic activity, or a "pure" socialism with only political control of economic activity. Still, we can imagine a line segment with pure capitalism at its right end point and pure socialism at its left end point; and we can think of arraying existing and possible social-economic arrangements along that line, depending on how closely they resemble one ideal type or the other. There might be dispute about the relative placement of certain hard cases. (I think this is more important than Berger does. He seems to assume it happens merely because we cannot discriminate perfectly. I think it suggests that we are reducing a two-or-more-dimensional classification to a one-dimensional array.) In practice, however, we will be able to talk comfortably in these terms most of the time.

Now I suspect that Berger wants to leave us with the strong impression that, wherever we are on that line, a move to the right is a move in the right direction. He does not say that. He says only that his 50 propositions strongly imply that a person with values that most of us profess would prefer capitalism to socialism. But the whole air of the book is that rightward is better. I have already given some examples of that tendency. Whenever Berger draws a particularly weak conclusion, one with even less evidence to support it than usual, he seems to come down that way. He is not tossing a coin.

Looking at the argument this way

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shows up its intellectual weakness. I have already agreed that industrial socialist economies tend to be less productive, less efficient, than advanced industrial capitalist economies. But now leave Eastern Europe out of it and look at the still fairly wide range covered by capitalist economies—some quite conservative, some more social-democratic. I detect no evidence whatever that those further to the right are more productive than those further to the left, that laissez-faire is automatically better, that corporatist-Keynesian Austria or welfare-state Norway makes less productive use of its resources than the contemporary United States, or that Mrs. Thatcher's Britain provides better economic performance than Mr. Heath's. The case is just as clear when it comes to the connection between economic organization and political democracy or personal liberty. Again, leave the socialist countries out of it. Is political democracy or personal liberty more restricted in the interventionist Netherlands than in Ronald Reagan's America? I should think just the reverse.

The proper conclusion is not that leftward is better. It is that socioeconomic functioning is related to socioeconomic organization in more ways and more complicated ways than Berger lets on. Sergeant Friday had the right idea.

ROBERT M. SOLOW

Robert M. Solow is professor of economics at MIT.

THE HIDDEN HERO

Breaking the Silence
by Walter Laqueur and Richard Breitman

(Simon & Schuster, 320 pp., $17.95)

I have never been able to convince myself of the political significance of the German resistance. I find it hard to believe that even with more encouragement from outside it could have overthrown the Nazi regime, or that it could have prevented the war from taking place or averted its disastrous final stages, in which so much damage was done to Europe and so many lives were lost. But the smaller the chances of success appear to have been, the greater the moral courage of those who still refused to shut their eyes to the character of the regime, who persisted in activities that were all too likely to lead to discovery, torture, and death. (Those who joined resistance movements in countries occupied by the Germans ran the same risks, of course, but they suffered no such conflict of conscience. Germans who resisted in Germany incurred the additional risk of being denounced as traitors.)

On the morning after the failure of the attempt to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944, Henning von Tresckow said: "Now everyone will turn upon us and cover us with abuse." But he had insisted that the attempt had to be made even if it failed. "We must prove to the world and to future generations that the men of the German resistance dared to take the decisive step and to hazard their lives upon it." Now that it had failed, he proposed to seek death by walking out into no man's land and letting the Russians shoot him. His parting words remain an indelible epitaph to the men and women of the resistance:

> God once promised to spare Sodom should there be found ten just men in the city. He will, I trust, spare Germany because of what we have done and not destroy her. None of us can complain of his lot. Whoever joined the resistance put on the shirt of Nessus. The worth of a man is certain only if he is prepared to sacrifice his life for his convictions.

Moral courage is the most unpredictable of virtues. Ten years after the July 20 plot, the widow of one of the leading political figures in the resistance, the Social Democrat Julius Leber, published a commemorative volume, *Das Gewissen Steht Auf* (which means, freely translated, *Conscience in Revolt*). The book brought together photographs and brief biographies of 64 men and women who paid with their lives for their opposition to the Nazis. Turning its pages, I have often wondered what else besides their courage they had in common. I have been struck by their widely different backgrounds: students and retired pensioners, scholars and soldiers, priests and officials, aristocrats and trade unionists.

Now Walter Laqueur and Richard Breitman have added another name to the list of known members of the resistance, a figure who, in a surprising way, extends the range of experience represented: a leading German industrialist who succeeded in escaping arrest, dying in Switzerland more than 20 years after the war at the age of 75.

Eduard Schulte was born in 1891 into an upper-middle-class Düsseldorf family and brought up in a tradition that may be described as a mixture of enlightened Protestantism and German classical-humanism. Crippled in an accident at the age of 18, he refused to let the loss of his left leg hamper him, and grew up as a man of strong character. His outstanding gifts as a manager brought him, in 1926, at the age of 34, to the head of one of Germany's oldest and biggest mining companies, Giesche. Following Germany's loss of territory after World War I, the firm was split into two parts—one in Poland, the other in Germany. Schulte's headquarters were in Breslau; he lived in a country estate in Pomerania, where he could exercise his passion for hunting. A man of conservative tastes, he was innovative in business but reserved in personal relations, hard-working, a natural leader whose judgment was much respected. But he took no part in politics.

IMMEDIATELY after Hitler came to power, Schulte was summoned to the meeting at which Hermann Goering, supported by Hjalmar Schacht, called on 25 German business leaders to put up a fund of three million marks, which would enable the Nazis to win an election that (according to Goering) would be the last election for ten, more likely for a hundred, years. Throughout the 1930s, Schulte conformed politically to the minimum extent necessary to retain his position as director-general of Giesche. But the distrust with which he had always regarded the Nazis turned into detestation, into a conviction that they would lead Germany to disaster. Once it became clear that war was certain, Schulte decided that it was his duty, as a patriotic German, to do everything possible to prevent a Nazi victory. But he did not join any resistance group. Beginning in August 1939, and continuing until December 1943, he used his po-

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sition at the heart of the German war economy to acquire secret information and pass it on to the Allied intelligence services during his regular business visits to Switzerland.

His first message, passed to his Swiss contacts on August 27, 1939, revealed the revised date of the German attack on Poland (September 1). His most remarkable message, delivered at the end of July 1942, was the first report sent to the West of the secret Nazi preparations for the mass extermination of several million Jews. Laqueur and Breitman retell the agonizing story of the incredulity with which Schulte's information was received; of the delay of four and a half months before a public declaration was issued by the Allies condemning the crimes of genocide; of their failure even then to attack the death camps from the air, as Schulte had urged them to do from the first.

By now in touch with Allen Dulles, the head of OSS in Switzerland, Schulte continued to supply information throughout 1943, including an accurate report of the damage done by Allied bombing raids on the German experimental rocket station at Peenemünde. The risks of such activity, and the strain of dissimulation, were formidable. Finally, on the morning of December 2, 1943, Schulte received a telephone call from a friend in Berlin informing him that an order had been issued for his arrest. He did not lose his nerve. He left his office at once, without returning home, and by a roundabout route (including Berlin) made his way to Zurich. He remained there for the rest of the war, frustrated by an inactivity that was only relieved by Dulles's invitation to put down on paper his thoughts about the future of Germany.

FOR A brief moment after the war, Schulte was encouraged to believe that he might play a leading role in the reconstruction of Germany, but he fell afoul of the American bureaucracy, which persisted, despite Dulles's protests, in regarding him as a crypto-Nazi and a double agent. He settled instead in Zurich, where he built up new business interests without ever recovering the single-minded concentration and drive that he had shown earlier. Schulte lived until 1965, when he died an unknown man. His courage and his services to the anti-Nazi cause were known only to a handful; he received no recognition of any sort. Indeed, when his surviving son applied to a Berlin court in 1970 for benefits under the law that offered compensation to the heirs of those who had suffered losses in the eastern territories, the German judges ruled that his father had committed a crime in betraying secrets to the Allies and that his flight in 1943 was the act of a criminal who had sought to escape arrest and punishment.

NONE OF this would have come to light if it had not been for the pertinacity of Laqueur and Breitman. The identity of the man whose information first alerted the world to the Holocaust while it was in its early stages was very well concealed. But Laqueur and Breitman refused to give up. They finally unearthed it in late 1983. Their efforts are briefly described in an afterword, and should arouse the admiration of every historical researcher. It is a pity that Laqueur and Breitman did not weave the story of their remarkable exercise in detection into the framework of their book, rather than presenting the reader with a conventional narrative. They would have heightened the reader's interest and made clear long before the penultimate page why it is only now, more than 40 years after the events described, that Eduard Schulte's story has been told.

Unfortunately, no letters or diaries appear to have survived that would bring Schulte's personality to life. Preferring to act on his own, he made contact with very few other Germans involved in resistance activities. No doubt he owed his life to his ability to keep his thoughts to himself. Thus the portrait of him, built up from the recollections of those who met him, remains a flat one. As the authors say, he was not a man in the saintly or heroic mold, and his talents as an organizer and manager, although outstanding, can be found in any age and society. What distinguished him, rather, was his independence of mind and spirit, his capacity in a hostile and threatening environment to swim against the tide, to reach and act upon his own conclusions. It is, as Laqueur and Breitman conclude, "that lonely kind of courage which is rare in any age and which (as William James once observed) is the kind of valor to which the monuments of nations should most of all be reared."

ALAN BULLOCK

Alan Bullock is master of St. Catherine's College, Oxford, and the author of, among other books, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (Harper & Row).

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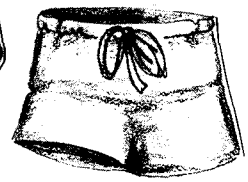

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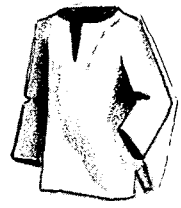

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CANADIAN CLUB

The Progress of Love by Alice Munro

(Knopf, 309 pp., $16.95)

The short story is a mere shadow of its former self these days—slim and stripped, positively anorexic. Only a few writers continue to create those full-bodied miniature universes of the old school. In this country, there's Peter Taylor, for one; in Ireland, William Trevor. And in Canada, there's Alice Munro. Some of her stories are so ample and fulfilling that they feel like novels. They present whole landscapes and cultures, whole families of characters.

The landscape is most often rural Canada. The culture is stern and uncushioned, and the characters are uncushioned as well. They are accustomed to doing without; they pride themselves on their fortitude and seriousness. In *The Beggar Maid* they endured abject, ugly poverty. In *The Moons of Jupiter* they tended to live a little more comfortably, but still they were far from frivolous.

The characters in the earlier collections were traveling along the distinct, deeply grooved tracks of their life stories, and it was the tracks themselves that provided the focus—the path, for instance, of the young heroine of the tales in *The Beggar Maid*, proceeding from her pinched childhood toward an urbane, affluent adulthood. In *The Progress of Love*, the focus has changed. The characters in these 11 stories are concerned not so much with the journey as with the journey's hidden meaning—how to view the journey, how to make sense of it. And frequently, they find the answer by juxtaposing certain events from their lives and studying the theme that emerges. It's as if they're solving a child's wooden puzzle, matching a shape to the cutout hollow that will receive it. In the most successful of the stories, the end result is a satisfying click as everything settles precisely into place.

A woman in "Miles City, Montana" carries with her the memory of a young boy's drowning that occurred in her childhood. During the funeral, she recalls, she experienced a wave of disgust and anger toward her parents. Now, while taking a vacation trip with her family, she nearly loses her own child to a drowning accident. But the little girl is rescued and the trip continues, while the woman reflects that her anger during that funeral was caused by her realization that parents cannot totally protect their offspring, that the death of a child seems, to parents, "anything but impossible or unnatural." So, she tells us, she and her husband travel on,

> with the two in the back seat trusting us, because of no choice, and we ourselves trusting to be forgiven, in time, for everything that had first to be seen and condemned by those children: whatever was flippant, arbitrary, careless, callous—all our natural, and particular, mistakes.

What's interesting here is the way the juxtaposed event—the boy's drowning—is dealt out to the reader so artfully. It begins the whole story, whereas most writers would have introduced it only after the mishap with the woman's daughter. Most would have used the near-drowning as a hook to reel in the memory of the actual drowning—a perfectly acceptable device, but it lacks the suddenness and mystery of Alice Munro's method. And then not all of the juxtaposed event is revealed at once. We're told about the woman's long-ago anger, but we're not told the cause. Only at the end does she state the cause, even though she's always known it. This narrative restraint sets up a tension beyond anything the plot alone could evoke. We're pulled along not just by What happened? but also by Why did she feel that way? and What is the significance?

In the title story, which may be the richest in the collection, the juxtapositions are not physical occurrences but moments when a particular viewpoint comes into question. The narrator is the kind of woman often found in Alice Munro's stories: divorced, sophisticated, self-supporting, the unlikely product of a sturdy Canadian farm family with simple tastes and rigid moral values. In apparently random order, this woman displays assorted family memories. She offers her mother's description of the terrifying moment when her own mother attempted suicide; then she tells us how a visiting aunt later described the same event, presenting the suicide attempt as benign and offhand, almost a joke. She tells us how her father, allowing his wife the right to do what she felt was just, stood by and watched her burn a much-needed inheritance in the kitchen stove; then she tells us she learned later that her father had known nothing about the incident. She must have invented his presence, she says; and yet she cannot bear to give up this heroic vision of him. Here we have juxtapositions within juxtapositions, for even if her father had been there, you could view his forbearance two different ways. "I consider that love," she says, but a man who is listening says, "Some people would consider it lunacy." The story is a whole kaleidoscope of varying perceptions. Everything has its other side—like the glamorous aunt who, after scrubbing her face, turns out to be so pale and wrinkled that her young niece almost expects to see "makeup lying in strips in the washbowl, like the old wallpaper we had soaked and peeled."

In "White Dump," it is different points in time that are juxtaposed, resulting in a striking portrait of the exact moment when a supposedly happy family begins to dissolve. In "Lichen," it is the ideal versus the actual: a man over and over abandons women as soon as discrepancies develop in his seamless images of them. And in "Monsieur les Deux Chapeaux," three episodes involving a grown brother combine to inform the hero of the course the rest of his life is going to take.

NOT ALL of the stories are easily entered. Who the narrator is, how old, what sex, what relation to the other characters—sometimes it takes some minutes to find all that out. This kind of problem is, I suspect, exactly what turns most readers to novels, where as soon as you've learned who's who you're set for the next few hundred pages. It's unfortunate that one of the most stubborn champions of the short story form should be contributing to the difficulty.

Still, the struggle's worth it. Once in these stories, you really are inside them; you have a vivid sense of the world that's being described. You can see the farmhouse guest room with its blue-and-white wallpaper and its view of blooming meadows beyond the meshy window screen. You can see the parlor with its decorative plate depicting Niagara Falls, and the summer cottage with its mismatched dishes and its "boring card game that taught you the names of

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Canadian wildflowers."

You can hear, too. There is some wonderfully precise wording here. A man tells his visiting fiancée that "he had thought she might show up," and the phrase "show up" tells it all: he's no longer happy to see her. An elderly man, learning of another man's plan to move in with a male lover, amiably remarks that "that's him's and your business," and only the uncharacteristic lapse in grammar gives away his shock. A doctor's wife, calling his office, asks if she might speak to "the Great Healer," thereby revealing much, both positive and negative, about their marriage.

Visiting a family on a plain, shabby farm in Ontario, a stranger is given the best bed in the house. "Well," his host says in the morning, "I hope you got some kind of a sleep on that old bed in there?" "This was Mr. Florence's cue to say that he had never slept better," we're told, but instead he dismays the whole family by answering, "I slept on worse." It's a failure not of manners but of language style—two cultures baffled by each other. That we can understand this so quickly, that we can enjoy both men's remarks and sympathize with them, proves how comfortably we ourselves have settled into Alice Munro's guest room.

ANNE TYLER

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

The Gentleman From Maryland: The Conscience of a Gay Conservative by Robert Bauman

(Arbor House, 276 pp., $17.95)

Ever since Barry Goldwater published *The Conscience of a Conservative* in 1960, younger Republicans who were influenced by his credo have tinkered with its catchy title. James Watt named his proclamation of last year *The Courage of a Conservative*. Gary Wills parodied the phrase by calling the memoir of his *National Review* apprenticeship *Confessions of a Conservative*. In the subtitle of his new book, former congressman Robert Bauman invokes the formulation with even greater irony. Far from writing the manifesto of gay Reaganism one might expect, Bauman argues that conciliation between Republicans and homosexuals is nowhere in sight. Summoning the tawdry facts of his political and sexual autobiography, he shows that even if gay conservatism can be an internally consistent position, it remains a sociological impossibility.

Bauman lived the contradiction for more than 20 years. As a congressional page in the 1950s, as a legislative aide in the 1960s, and finally as a combative congressman from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, he learned to hide his proclivities from his congressional staff, from his family, even from himself. He would indulge "this weakness of mine" when he was able, seeking out furtive encounters after dropping off the baby sitter. Somehow Carol, his wife of 20 years, managed to believe his stories about stopping for gas. But as he began gaining weight, drinking heavily, and despising himself fiercely for an urge he could not control, Bauman's conduct grew increasingly reckless. And the FBI was watching as he parked his car with "Maryland Member of Congress 1" plates in front of an infamous gay pick-up spot called the Chesapeake House.

The bureau investigated homosexuals in Congress during the late 1970s under the usual pretext that they were susceptible to blackmail. But from a supposed list of nine congressmen who had solicited male prostitutes, only Bauman was arrested—with the 1980 election two months away. Five minutes in front of a packed D.C. courtroom sealed his fate. Bauman alleges that Benjamin Civiletti's Justice Department intended to end his political career; his more farfetched suggestion is that the impetus for prosecuting him may have come from the House Democratic leadership, which despised him for his skill at parliamentary maneuvering.

The talent for obstruction that caused liberals to detest Bauman made him immensely popular with conservatives. Thinking they would stand by him, he tried to squirm. He gave a lengthy statement to the press admitting alcoholism (a time-honored dodge), which had conveniently prevented him from remembering essential details about the incident for which he was arrested. Bauman's drinking had not, however, affected his work as a legislator. Under fire, he changed the subject to the eternal verities. He spoke of being at peace with his god, and avoided using the term homosexual. As his life crumbled (Bauman's wife left him and he considered suicide) he thought primarily about how he could recapture his seat. Against the advice of pollster Arthur Finkelstein, whose name he misspells throughout the book, Bauman decided to make another stab. When the mud started flying he dropped out, and at last began the painful self-realization he had postponed in the hope of salvaging his career.

Part of *The Gentleman From Maryland*'s appeal is that Bauman hasn't completely sorted out his conflicting attitudes. He started out writing more than 600 pages of autobiography as a kind of therapy and ended up publishing them for money. "I would rather have spared my family and myself further public display," he writes in the preface, "but the editors of Arbor House made me an offer I could not reject. Indeed, I would not have rejected any reasonable offer." His entire book rings with this gut-wrenching honesty, so rare in the Washington confessional genre. Bauman spares himself little, even recalling the crass Bob Bauman jokes of the period. If (like me) you once circulated them, expect a twinge of remorse when you read Bauman's description of the pain he and his family suffered.

WHEN Bauman was first arrested, friends and supporters responded by simultaneously expressing sympathy and stabbing him in the back. William F Buckley sent $20,000 to help with financial difficulties while calling for Bauman's resignation in a column. Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation promised Bauman that he would make no public comment. Three days later, Weyrich told reporters at the National Press Club that Bauman had discredited the conservative movement and ought to quit. Still, most Bauman loyalists avoided this kind of sanctimony and ignored reporters' pleas for comment.

Then something unexpected happened: Bauman stopped lying. So long as

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he kept up the pretext that he wasn't gay, friends stood by him and helped him find work. But after he confessed his homosexuality in a speech before the American Bar Association in 1983, Bauman discovered that nobody in Washington wanted to be seen with him, let alone hire him. Despite his eight years in the House, doors slammed in his face when he called at Washington's major law firms. Bauman now practices law on his own, without any major clients. Among conservatives, and especially members of the Reagan administration, he is an untouchable.

Bauman's pariah status can't stem from the mere fact of his homosexuality. Two of the right's most virulent gay-baiters work closely with men in the mainstream of their movement whom they know to be homosexuals. The difference, in essence, is that the others obligingly continue to deny their homosexuality, however feebly. Such disavowal gives the religious right an answer to the charge of hypocrisy. Bauman, on the other hand, is a constant embarrassment. His insistence that he remains a homosexual despite a 20-year effort to become straight disproves the New Right's belief that gays make a conscious choice that violates natural law. His argument for gay monogamy detonates the thesis that leftist ideology, proselytizing, and sadomasochism are intrinsic corollaries of homosexual behavior.

AS A congressman, Bauman voted for bills allowing discrimination against gays, including the Family Protection Act of 1977, which he co-sponsored. But contrary to the assertions of his critics, Bauman was not a leader of the House anti-gay faction, and didn't bait homosexuals or denounce them publicly. Still, Bauman regrets his dismal, self-contradictory record. "How wrong I was in taking these stands was to be forcefully driven home to me in a few years as I myself felt the sting of economic discrimination," he writes. Bauman is still halfhearted about laws that protect only gays but wouldn't vote for the kind of legislation he supported when he was in Congress.

Yet as Bauman's discussion makes clear, the issue of hypocrisy is not so simple as it often appears to liberals. In denying his sexuality, Bauman convinced himself that his deviant behavior was the problem, not the law that condemned it. And even if he had accepted the idea of gay rights, it is unlikely that Bauman would have voted his conscience. Gay conservatives lack the luxury, in a sense, of squaring their personal lives with their political beliefs. To deviate from the family values agenda on a single issue, be it sexual preference or drug use, is to invite suspicion and speculation. The psychological benefits of consistency seldom justify its political costs.

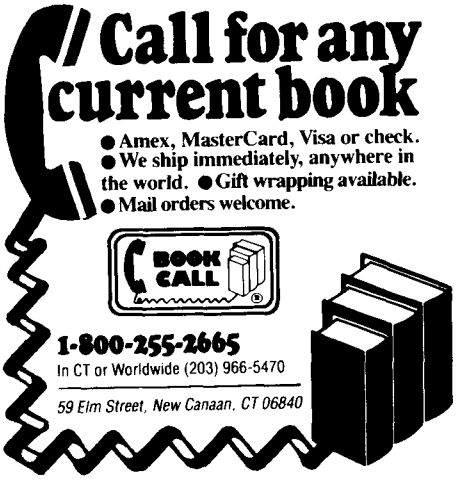
Bauman now disagrees with his old allies on issues besides homosexuality. Although he still opposes abortion, Bauman says he has learned compassion for blacks, the poor, and the handicapped, as well as for gays. And if his advocacy of "humane conservatism" hasn't made Republicans love him, it hasn't convinced gays that he is really one of them either. Gay leaders paraded him around briefly after his ABA speech, but he soon realized they wanted him "to repudiate conservatism and embrace not just my fellow man, but the liberal agenda as well." Because of his lingering sympathy for the right, he says, the Gay Rights National Lobby failed to come through with a promised job as their Capitol Hill lobbyist.

A tortuous attitude toward Catholicism makes Bauman's life even more complicated; although he argues for the Church accepting homosexuals, he doesn't really know how to square dogma and gay liberation. Bauman is ultimately less optimistic about reconciling gays and Catholics than he is about effecting a truce between gays and conservatives. But the Church played a crucial part in Bauman's emergence from the closet. When he read the annulment of his marriage, which officially declared him to be a homosexual, Bauman finally stopped denying it.

At times Bauman still seems anti-gay. Assailing "the squalid and sordid life" of promiscuity is becoming a mainstream view in the era of AIDS. But his assertion that "I would change my sexual orientation if that were within my power" must put him at odds with a majority of the gay community. Although he has convinced himself that homosexuality is an acceptable minority practice, he still seems offended by those who make an issue of their sexuality. Cruising was once the only satisfaction he could hope for. Gay liberation, for Bauman, consists of no longer depending on brief, anonymous encounters.

BAUMAN'S dislike of promiscuity and his generally moderate (although still evolving) position ought to lay the groundwork for mutual understanding between gays and conservatives. Unfortunately, his book arrives at a time when neither group seems interested in making friends. Where the dominant conservative position was once the nostalgia of a Joseph Epstein or a Midge Decter for the era of the closet, AIDS has put the neoconservative attitude of patronizing sympathy to rest. Norman Podhoretz recently expressed his doubts about an AIDS vaccine, which would permit homosexuals to "resume buggering each other by the hundreds with complete medical impunity." Among old-line conservatives, William F. Buckley recommends compulsory tattooing, while Joseph Sobran, in a recent *National Review* cover story, argued for placing more of the blame for AIDS on homosexuals themselves.

The battle doesn't leave much room for the agonized conscience of Robert Bauman. Although he has much to be bitter about after being rejected by every family he would join, Bauman is instead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thankful for being pushed toward the truth about his own nature. As the story of a personal crisis, *The Gentleman From Maryland* displays an almost uncanny equanimity. But what's most extraordinary is that Bauman's tragedy, hardly blunted by time, is offered as a public declaration. Whatever the reasons for his book's publication, Bauman clearly needed to recall his past before he could bury it. Now that he has told his tale, Bauman doesn't feel impelled to wallow in his misery any longer. What he longs for is "a shared experience with another person I love and who loves me." It's not so much to ask.

JACOB WEISBERG

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

U.S. troops occupied the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924 and in 1965, when President Johnson sent more than 20,000 soldiers to ensure that a government approved by the U.S. took power. The United States repeatedly intervened in Cuba by sending forces under the terms of the Platt Amendment of 1901, which made the country an unwilling U.S. protectorate. In 1954 the legally elected government of Guatemala was overthrown with the key assistance of the CIA.

Most of the military interventions were to protect or advance the commercial interests of U.S. corporations. Some were for the banana and sugar trade. Big-power rivalry was never a factor, but local insurrections often triggered the interventions.

U.S. military intervention in the affairs of Central America is an old, old story. Some elements of this saga are reminiscent of Soviet efforts—in Afghanistan, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia—to surround itself with reliable client states. For the big powers there is no limit to their security needs, real or imagined.

JEROME GROSSMAN
President, Council for a Livable World
Boston, Massachusetts

CLARINETISTS TAKE A STAND

To the editors:

Eugene J. McCarthy's article on the late Benny Goodman ("Big Benny," August 4) is demeaning to clarinetists and to the instrument. In addition, it contained factual errors. It is distressing that Mr. McCarthy is unable to find any special qualities in an instrument that was a particular favorite of Mozart, who interrupted work on his "Requiem" to compose his heavenly clarinet concerto, which was his last completed major work; or of Brahms, who wrote the opus 120 sonatas as his last pieces of chamber music. Of the latter, please note that there two opus 120 sonatas (not one as asserted by Mr. McCarthy), and that they were composed for the clarinet, specifically to be performed by Brahms and his friend, the clarinet virtuoso, Richard Muhlfeld. The "or viola" was added to the score presumably with thoughts of wider commercial possibilities. While these pieces are effective on the viola, there is no doubt that that they are clarinet sonatas, not viola music, as Mr. McCarthy posits.

STEPHEN R. MAX
Baltimore, Maryland

COMPUTER POETRY

To the editors:

The output of "Racter, the Poetic Computer" (August 11 & 18) does not suggest that meaning and author-ity are readers' constructs that cannot be mediated by a text. That Racter's poetry is sometimes meaningful to us implies, rather, that ideas, even when they turn up randomly in a computer printout, exist whether anyone worries about them or not. Congratulations: you've reinvented Platonism.

JOHN J. REILLY
Jersey City, New Jersey

IN DEFENSE OF DYLAN

To the editors:

Pray tell, what in the name of ethical literary criticism is Seamus Heaney prattling about in his review of *The Collected Letters of Dylan Thomas* ("The Ugly Suckling," August 11 & 18)? He would have it that if only Dylan weren't Dylan we would have a fine upstanding "reliable personality" dwelling and writing on the heron-priested shore rather than the "ugly suckling" who drank, debted, and disappointed.

Toward the end of his review Heaney appears to conjure up some inartistic litotic ambiguity. He wants it both ways by damning with faint praise an "enormously gifted" though flawed artist. I suggest that Heaney listen to the music and not peck away at the composer's peccadilloes.

JOHN WRIGHT
New York, New York

TRB, *from page 4*

another, and the current tax reform will reduce this inefficiency.

Ah, say the skeptics, but what about the $11 billion extra that this supposedly revenue-neutral bill will draw from the economy next year? Won't that risk pushing us into recession? The answer is that anyone who thinks $11 billion one way or another can dramatically affect a $4.5 trillion economy must have a heart attack every time he or she opens the newspaper. Responsible estimates of next year's deficit have varied far more than $11 billion over the past few weeks. The runaway farm program alone will be pumping 15 billion unexpected dollars from the government *into* the economy next year. So relax.

But . . . but . . . but . . . isn't this radical experiment just too risky at a moment when we're tottering on the brink of a recession anyway? Shouldn't we put it off? Answer: till when? In political reality, it's now or never. Look what happened to immigration reform, which died two years ago after making it through both houses of Congress and the conference committee, and won't get that far again any time soon.

Anyway, like the fellow who's going to stop smoking right after he finishes this one big project, there'll always be another excuse. Like the cure for any addiction, tax reform is going to cause some withdrawal symptoms. But pretty soon we're gonna feel great.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Post-Peruvian Depression

A FRIEND FROM PERU dropped by THE NEW REPUBLIC recently. He and I couldn't help noting the contrast between this soft-white Dupont Circle suite and our old digs in Lima: Peruvian Times, S.A. I've just returned to Washington after a year at that curious expatriate enterprise, which has been publishing Peru news in English for around 80 years—not counting the last time the military shut it down. Dingy is far too kind a word for the paper's offices, which were located downtown, near the fetid, clamorous Plaza San Martín. When it comes to noise and filth, Lima, population six million, takes a backseat to no city—though its defenders insist Calcutta is worse. But what do I like best about returning to TNR? There's no rooster. Here the fluorescent hum can get on your nerves, but at the Peruvian Times, the background noise included a constant, piercing cock-a-doodle-doo coming from somewhere inside the building. I never got within neck-wringing range of the bird. But I assume it belonged to the night watchman, who lived in a greasy flat upstairs with his wife and a fistful of kids. The last time I was at the paper, I didn't hear any crowing. My friend figures the watchman was fattening the bird for a special occasion, and the occasion had finally come. I only regret not being there to get a drumstick.

I HAVE JUST MOVED INTO an apartment in a rehabbed town house, around the corner from a busy fire station. This seems like tranquility itself after my last apartment: 146 Diez Canseco Street, No. 904, was a few doors over from Citibank, in the heart of Miraflores, Lima's once-classy, still-flashy beach suburb. There the crass din of Friday night bingo crowds mingles with the barking of countless street peddlers and the mumbling of drunks and beggars, a number of whom lived on the sidewalk right outside my front door. One evening at home I was startled by a huge explosion, followed by the screech of a getaway car and gunfire. I knew immediately what it was: they'd bombed Citibank—"they" being either the occult, quasi-Maoist Sendero Luminoso movement, or the Castroite Tupac Amaru gang. Such antics are no longer rare in Lima. Last February, after a wave of other attacks, President Alan García declared a curfew, and sent the army into the streets to enforce it. At first I didn't much care for the armored cars clanking past my picture window, or for the soldiers' way of announcing the curfew hour—a burst of automatic-weapons fire. But whether or not this did anything to stop terrorism, it quieted things down. Locals I knew were grateful: once again it was possible to get to sleep in central Miraflores before 4 a.m.

NOW AND THEN WASHINGTON barged in on my Miraflorine existence. One morning a telephone call interrupted me while I was taking a shower. It was an editor at National Public Radio, for whom I was a sometime correspondent. "They bombed the American Embassy last night!" he informed me. He meant the one in Peru. So what else was new? The "bombing" turned out to be a single stick of dynamite. No harm done. But I filed a spot anyway. It was juicier than the real story: normality, at least as Peruvians define it, was blithely persisting despite the most bizarre insurgency in the hemisphere. Writing in the *Atlantic* two years ago, journalist Philip Bennett (also a Peruvian Times alumnus) warned of the Peruvian authorities' failure to contain Sendero and of the gang's then-incipient move toward Lima. He foresaw more bloodshed, and the creeping militarization of Peruvian society. Now all that has come to pass. But it has happened without generating any palpable, moment-to-moment feeling of crisis. In Peru people have learned to absorb a lot of chaos. The latest violence will stun them, then they recover. The rich kids go back to surfing, while the street kids calmly return to their shoeshine businesses, bantering cheekily with the army and police patrols who invade their space on the sidewalk.

HOW THEY'D MARVEL at what passes for a crisis in the American capital. The subway gets stuck in the tunnel. Pat Buchanan retires from the "McLaughlin Group." And the president, setting an example for the nation, urinates in a jar. How to explain that one back in Miraflores? After a year in Peru, which produces more cocaine paste than any other country in the world, I had come to look on drugs more as a valuable source of foreign exchange than as a threat to humanity. Every other Friday, I'd take a four-inch stack of orange-and-white bills—my pay from the Peruvian Times—and rush across the Plaza San Martín to "Wall Street," a noisome little alley where free-market money changers used to congregate. There, before my Peruvian cash had time to decline in value, I would swap it for much more reliable American money, usually crisp $50 or $100 bills. And where did those come from? Drug dealers, fresh from the coke-making centers in the jungle, made regular cash deliveries on Wall Street every night. Nobody said anything about this in public, and the trade was considered perfectly respectable. Lots of American tourists used to change money on Wall Street—though most of them probably weren't aware of where the bills came from. It was quite common, and strangely heartwarming, to see college kids work their way through school trading coca-dollars.

IF I COULD INVITE ONLY one Peruvian to visit Washington, it would be Romulo, my Miraflores landlady's Indian handyman. She used to send him to clean up my place—I think just to show that she could afford her own "butler." Romulo was from Ayacucho, an ancient and spectacular province 9,000 feet up in the Andes. In colonial times, the city of Ayacucho was a major way station between the fabulous mine at Potosí in Bolivia and Lima on the Pacific. Silver built 33 churches there. But the mines ran out a long time ago, and Ayacucho slipped back into poverty and isolation—until its recent return to prominence as the birthplace of Sendero Luminoso. Now it is the scene of a bloody, largely unreported war between Sendero and the Peruvian armed forces. For Romulo, Lima, ugly and foreign though it may be, is safer than home. Sweeping my floor one day, he paused to watch me typing a story on my portable PC. "The United States must be really nice, sir," he said after a while. What could I tell him? It sure is.

C. L.

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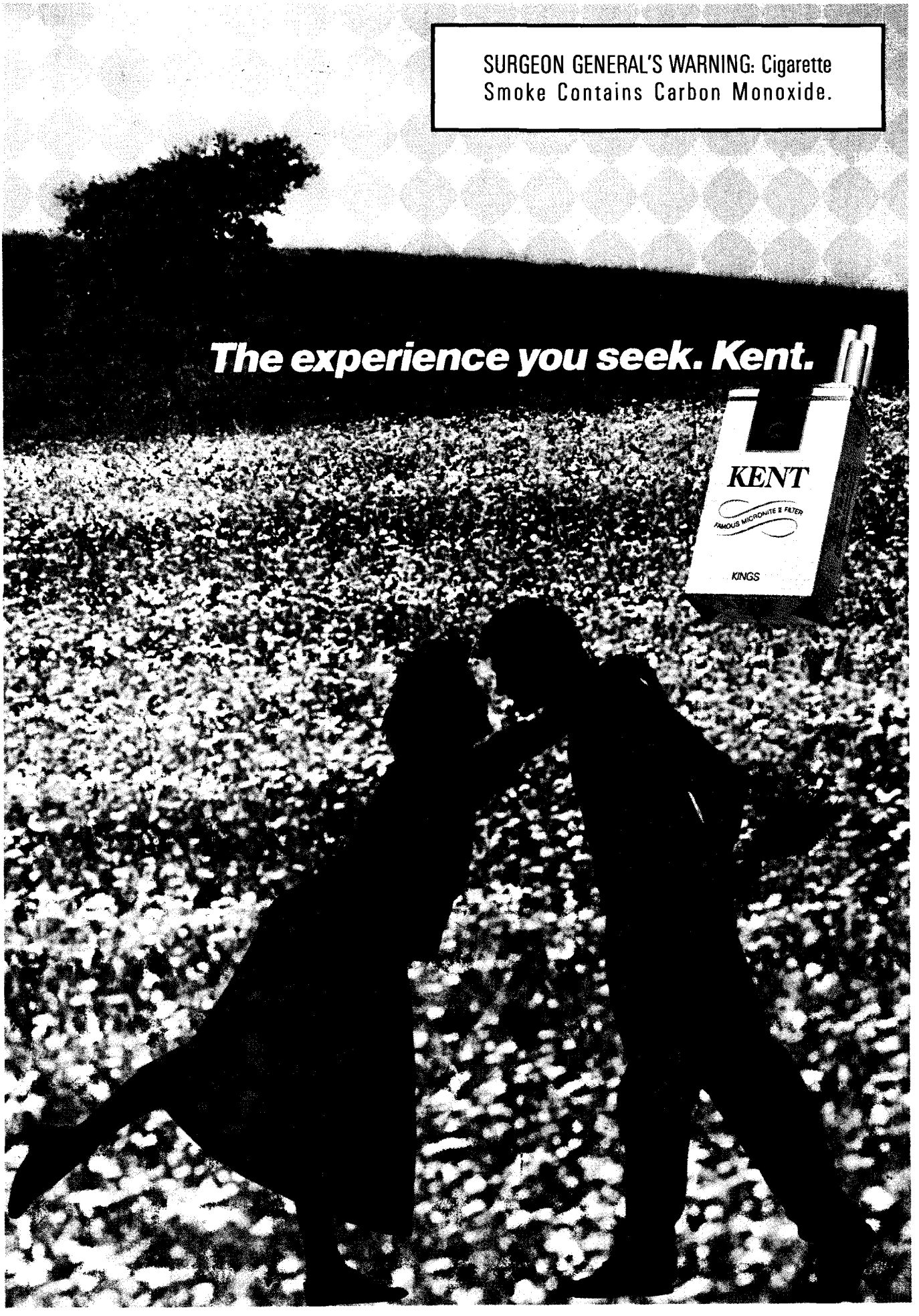

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